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RODEO

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REDEEMED

DOUGHTY DEEDS

A BRAZILIAN MYSTIC

THE CONQUEST OF THE RIVER PLATE

CARTAGENA AND THE BANKS OF THE RIVER SINU

PEDRO DE VALDIVIA

HERNANDO DE SOTO

A VANISHED ARCADIA

JOSÉ ANTONIO PAEZ

HORSES OF THE CONQUEST

WRIT IN SAND

PORTRAIT OF A DICTATOR

MIRAGES

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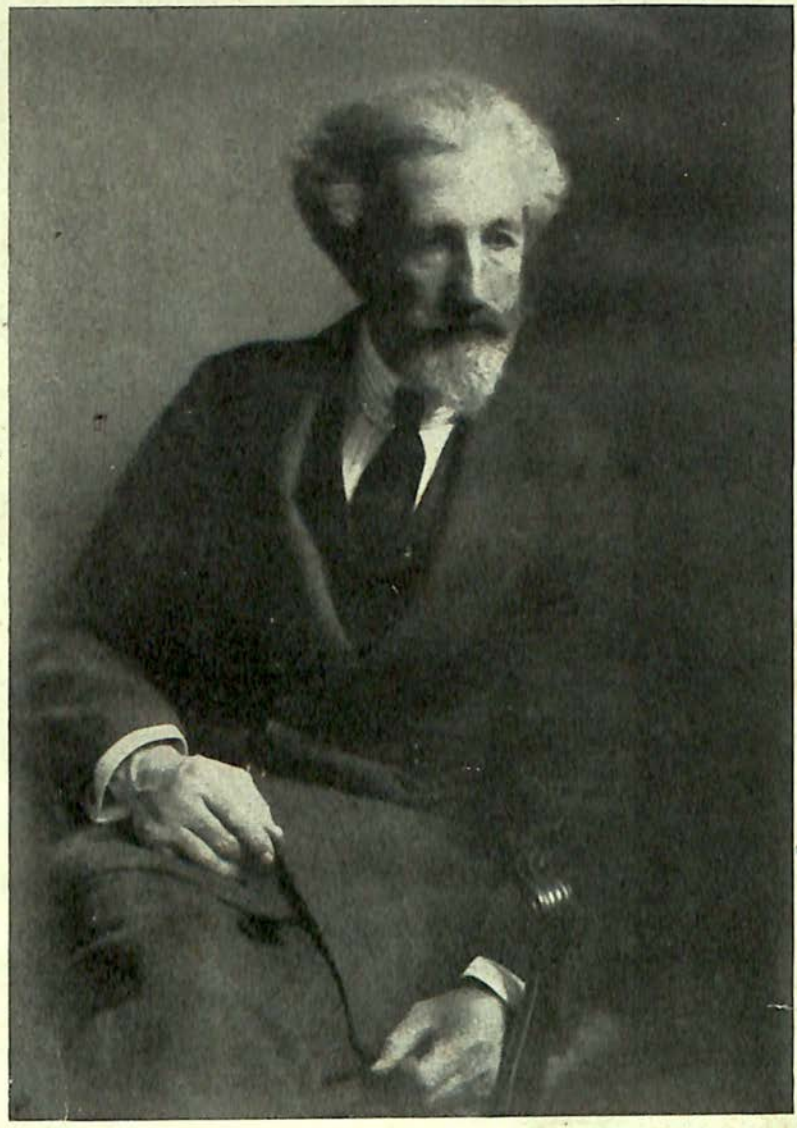

R. B. Cunninghame Graham

RODEO

A COLLECTION OF

THE TALES AND SKETCHES OF

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM

SELECTED BY

A. F. TSCHIFFELY

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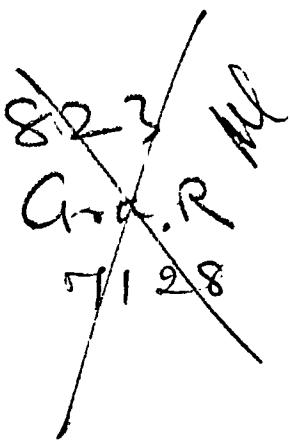

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT
THE WINDMILL PRESS, KINGSWOOD, SURREY

A

TSCHIFFELY, MANCHA Y GATO

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INTRODUCTION

If I were asked to select fifty paintings by a Raphael, a Da Vinci, or a Velasquez, the task of deciding which pictures to hang in an exhibition representing the master's particular art would not be more difficult than it has been for me to select the tales and sketches in this book.

I know that literary critics will—in some cases—not agree with my choice; but I have purposely not included certain masterpieces by this astonishing author: R. B. Cunninghame Graham.

Years before I had the privilege of making the acquaintance of "Don Roberto," as intimate friends call him, I had read some of his works which are to be found in any *casa bien*, and even in ranches in the remotest parts of South America where his works are justly admired, because he alone among foreign writers has lived in North and South America when men were *hombres* and gentlemen *cavaliers*.

Many long years of travel in the constant presence of danger, the enduring of untold hardships, and, above all, a super-keen sense of observation, have helped to give birth to these tales and sketches which, in reality, contain fragments of a unique autobiography.

Although this collection of stories is far from complete, I hope that readers will—to some extent—become acquainted with the works of one of the most picturesque, intriguing and fascinating literary characters.

The extraordinary and virile personality of this "*Hidalgo*," often called "*The Last of the Cavaliers*," shines throughout these pages.

Texas and Mexico in the *wild and woolly* days, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Venezuela, Paraguay, Morocco, Scotland, England and Spain; persons—good, bad and indifferent—

and unknown places, have had everlasting monuments built by the pen of Cunninghame Graham: a pen, tempered, keen and just as the *espada* of an *hidalgo* of old.

Although the author may appear to be an impenitent cynic, his writings radiate human understanding and warmth, and he always has a good word for the *under-dog*; for *life in the raw* has given him that rare sense of values no other life can give.

Joseph Conrad, one of "Don Roberto's" greatest friends and admirers—who sometimes affectionately termed him "Prince Errant"—once wrote to him: "You have a fiendish gift of showing the futility, the ghastly, jocular futility of life. *Et c'est très fin—très fin. C'est finement vu et c'est exprimé avec finesse, presque à mots couverts, avec de l'esprit dans chaque phrase . . .*"

In another letter Conrad wrote: "What you don't know! From the outside of a snail to the inside of a prison! When I think of you I feel as though I had lived all my life in a dark hole without ever seeing or knowing anything."

G. B. Shaw, another of the author's friends, has written: "Cunninghame Graham is the hero of his own book (*Mogreb-El-Acksa*), but I have not made him the hero of my play (*Captain Brassbound's Conversion*), because so incredible a personage must have destroyed its likelihood—such as it is. And yet he must be real; for I have seen him with these eyes; and I am one of the few living men who can decipher the curious alphabet in which he writes his private letters . . . He is a fascinating mystery to a sedentary person like myself. The horse, a dangerous animal, whom, when I cannot avoid, I propitiate with apples and sugar, he bestrides and dominates as fearlessly, yet with true republican sense of the rights of the four-legged creature whose martyrdom and man's shame therein he has told most powerfully in his *Calvary*, a tale with an edge that will cut the soft cruel heart and strike fire from the hard kind ones. He handles the other weapons as familiarly as the pen: mediæval sword and modern Mauser

are to him as umbrellas and Kodaks as to me . . ."

Not long ago, whilst listening to a lively after-dinner discussion by a number of leading English literary men, I thought the time had come for me to throw in the golden apple.

"Why," I asked when I could make myself heard, "is Cunninghame Graham not widely known to the English and American public, when his name is famous in other countries?"

To this rather nasty question one of the party immediately made the following laconic reply: "He writes too well."

During the ensuing silence, peering through a veritable screen of bluish tobacco fumes which—like a shifting Scotch mist—slowly rose towards the ceiling, I saw heads nodding approval as glasses were being raised.

As I dreamily observed the erratic flow of a miniature Gulf Stream of smoke, imagination began to give it shape and life; and lo, first faintly, then clearer and clearer, I saw the District of Menteith with its heather-covered mountains and lake. Like a gigantic sheaf of golden wheat, sun-rays pierced the mists and shone down on the three islands in the middle of the blue, mirror-like expanse of water. Among the stately old trees and thick clusters of bushes I saw the moss-covered ruins of the castle of the Grahams, Earls of Menteith.

A boy, whose features I seemed to recognise, skipped over the crumbling remains of walls; and then, running down to the shore, rowed to the main land in a boat.

Presently the same boy appeared in the setting of an English Public School, looking like an incarcerated leopard. After a few moments this vision vanished, only to reappear again in Spain, with a painstaking tutor leaning over the same boy, and addressing him as "Robertito" whilst patiently pointing out errors here and there.

Watching a capriciously winding and curling ribbon of smoke, as it gradually spiralled upwards, finally forming a

slow-moving whirlpool which suggested thousands of cattle milling around in circles during a *rodeo* in the Argentine pampas, I next saw the grown-up "Robertito," lasso in hand and seated on a fiery stock-pony, dashing in and out of the vast herd.

In a flash the miracle of imagination dissolved this vivid picture; and, behold, there was the same man in the *sierras* and hot cactus-sprinkled *meseta* of Mexico, riding ahead of four covered wagons the wheels of which squealed and creaked as the oxen, step by step, plodded through the hot soft sand. From under the wide brim of his *sombrero* the rider's keen eyes skimmed the distant horizon beyond which flows the Rio Grande and begin the plains of Texas. Every now and again, suspecting the slightest movement behind a grotesque giant cactus plant, the horseman gripped the rifle which lay in front of him across the saddle. Experience had obviously taught him that Indians, their lithe bodies painted green, and standing motionless among the cacti, might be lurking there, ready to dispatch their wooden messengers of death.

Suddenly the scenery changed; and I recognised "Don Roberto," disguised in Moorish garb, his white cloak fluttering behind him like a shipwrecked sailor's distress signal in a storm, as his horse raced over a rolling sea of shimmering sand, vainly trying to increase the short distance which separated him from his hotly pursuing enemies whose *Forbidden City* (Tarudant) he had cunningly attempted to enter.

At this point my exciting dream was interrupted by one of my table-neighbours, so I mechanically struck a match and lit another cigarette, leaving the wild riders of the desert to race on . . .

Presently, when the faint booming of "Big Ben" in the distance reached my ears, it made me think about Cunninghame Graham's parliamentary career.

Not only had he known and lived among now fast-vanishing

and almost legendary races and peoples; but later—like a thunderbolt—this cultured, big-hearted and cosmopolitan Scot returned from far-away and almost unknown lands and entered the House of Commons with his brief: the case for the under-dog.

In words that stung like the thong of a stock-whip he startled the somniferous mid-Victorian members of the House, and when he realised that he could not make them move he decided to shock them. And he certainly succeeded.

In conclusion to this introductory note I must add that if this book fails to acquaint the reader with "Don Roberto," I shall humbly doff my battered *sombrero* to the stubborn bronco "Publico"; and, shaking the dust off me, I shall, in a disappointed tone of voice say: "You beat me."

A. F. TSCHIFFELY.

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TO THE INCURIOUS READER

FEW writers nowadays, except of scientific works, write prefaces; your best-seller never.

Possibly they do wisely, for your preface is a snare. It breaks down all the barriers authorship raises between the writer and the man who reads the book.

As long as writers strut upon the stage with the cothurnus and the mask impersonality affords, they hide behind their characters. The public read their lucubrations, admires the story, praise their fecundity, for no self-respecting writer ever writes less than a thousand or twelve hundred pages, excuse the faults of grammar (if they perceive them), and look at him as a being of a different creation to themselves.

But in your preface your high-flying bird comes down to earth, like a winged pheasant or an aeroplane with engine trouble. Then, he has to face his public man to man subject to headaches, pains in the diaphragm and all those petty failings that piffling scribblers take such trouble to point out in their attacks upon great names. Not by the way that any of the alleged immortals have been damaged in the least by their attacks, or that the general public has ever heard of them.

The Temple of Ancyra still stands unharmed in the clear Anatolian air despite the micturition of innumerable dogs.

Once face to face, it often comes to light that the contriver, say, of the best seller of the year is a poor creature considered as a man, when he essays a preface. It often proves to be but either a puff of his own wares—a sort of breaking wind *à Tergo*, or a mere string of commonplaces, as ill put together, as we say in Scotland, as a "low country nowt." So he does wisely to refrain. I feel for him, most keenly, especially when, as in the present case, I share his qualms.

A fellow feeling, as Garrick in his immortal epilogue declares, makes us feel kindly to our fellows, but mostly to ourselves.

Who, in remembering his own sufferings, does not commiserate a dentist led to a brother of the forceps' door, between his daughter and his wife? Just as a drowning man is said—though I do not believe it—in one brief moment to review his whole past life, I have perforce to write an introduction, to crimes against the English language, errors in taste, and faults in grammar committed over a period of forty years.

Better, far better, to find oneself swept down a flooded river, striving to keep clear of one's horse's whirling feet, half choked, and clutching to his mane, than to take pen in hand to speak of things that any man left with a shred of self-respect would like to bury in oblivion.

Because, you see, incurious reader, and I give thanks to Allah that you are incurious, what I have written, I have written, and whether it is true or not, about the drowning man, it is the case, without a doubt, when one surveys an Omnium Gatherum, Hotch-Potch, Sea-pie, or Salmagundi—call it what you will—of one's own writings. Madonna mia! How could I have written that! My excuse I hope was youth, the period of omniscience. But still I might have finished all those sentences; not broken off to moralize right in the middle of the tale; split less infinitives, and remembered those rules of grammar that I have disregarded, as freely as a democratic leader tramps on the rights of the poor taxables who put him into power.

Then comes the satisfying thought, what does the reader know about such things? For he looks on the scourings of your brain but as a recreation for an hour or two. What does he know (or can) about the midnight oil or the self slave-driving, the writer, painter, sculptor or composer suffers, before he can attack the empty canvas, the blank accusing page, the vacant score, or the unmanipulated clay?

No; let no one talk to me about the joys of literary work! He has not felt the shame of the poor writer who, even if he has a good review or two, is conscious of a misplaced comma in the tenth line of the eighteenth page, and walks the streets as Guido Fawkes and Catesby may have walked, wrapped in their cloaks, thinking that every passer-by knew they were piling cask on cask of gunpowder, ready to blow King Jamie back to Scotland and the parliament to hell.

That is the darker aspect of the writer's tragedy. But there are joys. Even the Lyons martyrs, during the torment of the rack, are said to have experienced sweet visions, and to have smiled amidst their agony.

When, wrapped in the fragrant contemplation of my travel, I mean through life, not merely of the Marco Poloesque peregrinations through foreign lands, I look at the great pile of proofs before me with a feeling of amazement, for they rise up and seem to say, was all this really your own handiwork? Did you put soul into us, in the days we were conceived, new citizens in the realms of fancy?

Then turning once more to my proofs, I seem to wander in a cemetery full of the tombstones that Time raises for dead souls.

I recognize friends that once were alive in the way that one recognizes names of friends upon the headstones in an old-world country churchyard, half buried in lush grass.

Secular elm-trees guard the cemetery. Houseleek grows on the mossy tiles of the squat Saxon church, and in the corner broods a yew, a shoot perhaps of the old tree that furnished homes for the stout carles who fought at Agincourt. On the square tower, a sundial fails to record either serene or stormy hours, the gnomon almost slipping from the masonry. All is well with the souls who sleep so soundly, lulled by the whispering trees. It may be that they are all as dead as are the bodies that once sheltered them, enabling them to live. That I leave to greater and more learned clerks

to comment on, and leave the question still unanswered, after their use and wont.

But, fluttering the leaves of the brief chronicle of their passage through the realms of fancy I recognize old friends, souls that were once alive. The first deals with the adventures in the fields of Cupid, of one who once paraded up and down the streets to sell the only merchandise she had, as have walked several high-placed ladies whose names I do not mention, from "respect —— —" rather than from terror of the law. Upon what beat she works, under what street-lamp lingers, smiling upon the passer-by professionally, that is to me unknown. Perhaps she drees her weird in some celestial *maison tolérée*, where she can choose which of the angels strikes her fancy, without an interfering Celestina, forcing into her arms some mumbling, lecherous rich man, stricken in years, gap-toothed, and with marvellous weak hams.

Peace to her cosmetics! I hope she flits about like a Brazilian parakeet, giving the glad eye as she passes them to all the younger of the angels, born in the place, who people paradise.

Others rise from the depths of Time, as silently as a fish cleaves the water just before a "rise."

Slight, sinewy, with faces the colour of mahogany, they sit upon their saddles, upright as lances, swinging to every motion of the horse. So easily they sit, and yet so firmly, that if the horse bounds snorting to one side, they too have shied with him, just as a centaur may have bounded, startled by a nymph plunging into a pool on the Thessalian plains.

Cold, frosty mornings on the southern Pampa, long, stifling rides in Paraguay, rough mountain paths in Mexico and Spain, slow marches in the gloom of tropic forests, wild gallops at the Powder Play under the shadow of the Atlas Mountains, plodding after cattle in the heat, those dull interminable days, when a man feels the ache between the shoulders, long ere his forty years, come back to me.

Fierce revolutions to free the State, and place the revolu-

tionists in power, when Liberty, invoked so loudly by both sides, is changed into a sanguinary goddess, steeped in the blood of her own votaries, they too rise from the half-forgotten depths of memory, making me want to tear my proofs to pieces and leave my brain clean-swept of all the triumphs recorded in them with hoisting of the national flag, a sun that seems to wink as he peers over a range of mountains with some ironic motto, such as "for freedom, constitutional government and the rights of *Viva la república!*" And then the line of prisoners, ranged up against the brown adobe wall, whose blood is to be shed to cement the national cause, for blood and freedom seem to go hand in hand, the whole world over. The morning sun lights up the solitary plaza. Two or three yellow dogs are quarrelling over some refuse. A line of vultures sit waiting on the tops of houses—as if they scented blood. In the clear air the distant sierras stand up as if cut out of cardboard, the Comandante, paunchy and tightly buttoned in his uniform, but yet a horseman from the high crown of his poblano hat to his bright silver spurs, that dangle off his heels, sits rolling a bush cigarette. Some of the prisoners are smoking carelessly, some stand with the fixed stare that Goya has recorded in his *Desastres de la Guerra*, so horribly that I can hardly bear to look at it, and would have forgotten but for these damned proofs. A priest steps forward, holding a crucifix. Some kneel and others wave it from them with an oath. The Comandante straightens on his horse. The firing-party stand alert like greyhounds straining at the leash.

A rasped-out "Fuegol" and the prisoners collapse and lie bundles of old rags upon the sand. Some kick convulsively in their last agony, and the Comandante blowing a solfatara of blue smoke out of his nostrils, says to the sergeant: "Finish me these dogs, for they were Christians." Two or three revolver shots at close quarters, open the gates of Heaven to the Christians.

Scared by the volley the vultures take flight, as if regret-

fully, and the republic is once more free to tread the paths of justice and of peace.

That, oh, Incurious Reader, is all I have to say to you, by way of preface, foreword, prologue—or anything you choose.

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM.

LONG WOLF

INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY KERMIT ROOSEVELT

MY interest in Mr. Cunninghame-Graham's writings was first aroused through reading the dedication in Mr. W. H. Hudson's delightful collection of short stories, gathered under the title *El Ombú*. It runs as follows:

To My Friend

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM

("*Singularisimo Escritor Inglés*")

Who has lived with and knows (even to the marrow as they would themselves say) the horsemen of the Pampas, and who alone of European writers has rendered something of the vanishing colour of that remote life.

My father had been for many years an eager reader of all that Mr. Cunninghame Graham wrote, and I well remember his appreciation of the following letter which he received from him shortly after Buffalo Bill's death:

March 27th, 1917.

"Cartagena de Indias,
"Colombia.
"The Honourable,
"Colonel Theodore Roosevelt.

"Dear Colonel Roosevelt,—

"I saw by chance to-day in *Harper's Magazine* that a national monument is to be raised to my old friend Colonel Cody; that it is to take the form of a statue of himself on

horseback (I hope the horse will be old Buckskin Joe), that he is to be looking out over the North Platte, and that you have kindly consented to receive subscriptions for it.

"When Cody and I were both young I remember him at the Horsehead Crossing, in or about the year 1880 I think, and subsequently saw him next year with the first germs of his great show in San Antonio de Bejar, Texas. (God bless Western Texas, as we used to say in those days—it is a thirsty land.)

"Cody was a picturesque character, a good fellow (I hope the story of his game of poker on his death-bed is not apocryphal), and a delightful figure on horseback. How well I can see him on his beautiful grey horse in the show!

"Every American child should learn at school the history of the conquest of the West.

"The names of Kit Carson, of General Custer and of Colonel Cody should be as household words to them. These men as truly helped to form an empire as did the Spanish Conquistadores.

"Nor should Sitting Bull, the Short Wolf, Crazy Horses and Rain-in-the-Face be forgotten.

"They too were Americans, and showed the same heroic qualities as did their conquerors.

"I would not have Captain Jim of the Modocs fall into oblivion either.

"All of these men, and they were men of the clearest grit, as no one knows better than yourself, were actors in a tremendous drama, set in such surroundings as the world never saw before, or will see again.

"*Anch' io son pittore*, that is to say, I too knew the buffalo, the Apaches, and the other tribes of the Rio Grande.

"May I then trouble you with my obolus, a cheque for £20 towards the national monument to Buffalo Bill?

"I envy him his burial-place.

"May the statue long stand looking out over the North Platte.

"If in another world there is any riding—and God forbid that I should go to any heaven in which there are no horses—I cannot but think that there will be a soft swishing as of the footsteps of some invisible horse heard occasionally on the familiar trails over which the equestrian statue is to look.

"Believe me, dear Colonel Roosevelt,

"Yours most sincerely,

"R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM.

"P.S.—I congratulate you most heartily on the force which you are raising. It is like you, and if I had been blindfolded and asked who was raising such a force, I should have answered unanimously, Teddy Roosevelt.

"After eleven months in the Argentine, buying horses for the British Government, I am at present in Colombia on a mission connected with cattle, on the same account.

"R. B. C. G."

I thought at the time that here was the writer that could make Buffalo Bill and his era live and speak and act for our children and our children's children. After the Armistice I made the suggestion, and it was at first favourably received, but upon thinking it over Mr. Cunninghame Graham decided that, since his roaming in North America and participation in our frontier life had been largely confined to our South-West and to Mexico, he did not feel inclined to take up a work which would necessarily deal largely with the bleak frozen winters of the North-West, to which he was a stranger.

Accompanying his final decision, as a grateful earnest of his interest, and appreciation of the West, he sent the following sketch, which, instead of reconciling us to the decision, can only serve to make us regret it the more.

KERMIT ROOSEVELT.

LONG WOLF

In a lone corner of a crowded London cemetery, just at the end of a smoke-stained, Greco-Roman colonnade, under a poplar tree, nestles a neglected grave.

The English climate has done its worst upon it. Smoke, rain, and then more smoke, and still more rain, the fetid breath of millions, the fumes of factories, the reek of petrol rising from little Stygian pools on the wood pavements, the frost, the sun, the decimating winds of spring, have honeycombed the headstone, leaving it pitted as if with small-pox, or an old piece of parchment that has long moulded in a chest.

Upon the stone is cut the name of Long Wolf and an inscription setting forth he died in 1892 in Colonel Cody's Show. Years he had numbered fifty-nine. The legend says he was chief—I think a chief of the Ogalla Sioux, if memory does not play me false.

In high relief upon the cross, our emblem of salvation, a wolf is sculptured, the emblem of the tutelary beast he probably chose for himself in youth, during his medicine fast. It may have been that the name grew from some exploit or some incident in early life. Most probably the long wolf meant more to him than did the cross that Colonel Cody has erected over his dead friend and comrade in the wild life they understood so well. If the Long Wolf resents it, they can discuss the matter where they now ride—for that they ride, perhaps some Bronco Pegasus, I feel certain, as heaven would be no heaven to them if they were doomed to walk.

From whence the Long Wolf came so far, to lay his bones in the quiet corner of the Brompton Cemetery where now he sleeps, that is to me unknown, as absolutely as the fair field where the fledged bird had flown was to the poet. All that I know is that the bird was fledged, flew for some nine-and-fifty years, and now rests quietly in his forgotten grave.

The tombstones stand up, white in marble, grey in granite, and smoke-defiled when cut in common stone. They stand like soldiers, all in serried rows. The occupiers of the graves beneath them sleep on undisturbed by railway whistle or motor-horn, by blasts of steam, by factory sirens, or the continuous rumble of our Babylon. These were familiar sounds to them in life. If they could wake and should not hear them, their ears would pine for what had filled them all their lives. Upon each stone is set the name and age and virtues of its occupant. A pious text informs the world that a devoted wife and mother died in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection. All charitable folk will hope her faith has been rewarded in the empyrean that she now inhabits, just as her virtue was rewarded here on earth, for to be forty years a devoted wife and mother is its own reward.

A little farther off, a general, his battles over, reposes in his warrior's cloak. He needs it, for the white marble makes a chilly couch in our high latitude. A champion sculler, with his marble boat and broken sculls, has gained his prize. A pugilist is cut in stone in fighting attitude, and farther off there sleeps a publican.

Men, women, children, gentle and simple poets and statesmen, soldiers, sailors, and solid merchants, once held in honour upon 'Change, young girls, wives, husbands, mothers, fathers, and representatives of every age and class of man, take their repose under the dingy grass. Their very multitude surely must give them some protection, and a sense of fellowship . . . for they all died in the same faith, with common speech and aspiration, in their own fatherland.

Under the poplar-tree, its leaves just falling, golden in the autumn frost, there lies a wilding. No one is near with whom in the long nights of rain and winter he can exchange a word.

The prosperous citizens, in their well-cared-for tombs, with their trim beds above them often gay with flowers, even

in death appear to look askance at the new Christian, with his wolf above the cross. No one to place even a bunch of violets on his grave, although the pious hand that buried him, perhaps in foresight of the loneliness certain to overtake the Long Wolf, lost in the thick ranks of palefaces, has placed in two glass cases (one of them is cracked) some artificial pansies—perhaps for thought, perhaps for recollection—all is one, for thought and recollection fade into one another almost insensibly.

On what forgotten creek, in what lost corner of the Dakotas, where once his race lorded it over buffalo and mustang, the Long Wolf first saw light, I have as little knowledge as of the composition of the mysterious thing that gave him life, accompanied him throughout his days, and then departed into the nothingness from whence it came.

I see the teepees set by the river's side, with the thin smoke that rises from the Indians' parsimonious fire curling out through the poles. The wolfish-looking dogs lie sleeping at the lee side of them; children play in the sun the strange and quiet games that Indian children play. Out on the prairie feed the horses under guard. Amongst these quiet children Long Wolf must have played, lassoed the dogs, or shot his little arrows at the birds. From his youth upward he must have been a rider patient and painstaking as the Indians are with horses, without the dash and fire that characterise the Western men and Mexicans.

At seventeen or eighteen, when he had assumed the name that now so strangely differentiates him from all those with whom he lies, he must have taken part in many a war-party. Upon the trail, strung out in a long line, he must have ridden with the other braves, silent and watchful, holding the horse-hair bridle with the high, light touch that every Indian has by nature and so few Europeans can acquire. He must have suffered hunger, thirst, fatigue, and all the dangers incidental to the life of those days on the plains long ere the railroad crossed them and when the buffalo migrated annually, in

countless thousands, followed by the attendant packs of wolves. What his adventures were, how many scalps he took, and what atrocities he saw committed, only he himself could tell and Indians keep no diaries except in memory.

Little by little, as the West was day by day invaded by the whites, the buffalo grew scarcer and game was difficult to kill, he and the tribe would find their means of livelihood filched from them and their position insecure. Whether the chief took part in the great fight upon the Little Big Horn, or later joined the Ghost Dancers in their pathetic struggle, is a sealed book to all but him who brought the Long Wolf over in his company, and he has joined the chief on the last trail.

It is best perhaps we should know nothing, for, after all, what most concerns those who pass by his grave, rendered more lonely than if it had been dug out on the prairie, by the crowd of monuments of alien folk who crowd about it, is that he lies there, waiting for the last war-whoop, uncared-for and alone.

Whether his children, if he had any, talk of his death in the strange city, buried in fog and gloom, so vast and noisy, with its life so circumscribed by customs and by laws, remains a problem never to be solved. How and of what disease he died is long forgotten by the men who pass his tombstone so unheedingly. His spirit may have returned to the region of the Red Pipestone Quarry, or ride in some wild heaven, where buffalo are ever plentiful, grass green, and water ever running, that the Creator of the Indians must have prepared for them, as He is all-wise and merciful.

It may be that it still haunts hovering above the grave under the poplar-tree. I like to think, when all is hushed in the fine summer nights, and even London sleeps, that the wolf carved on the tomb takes life upon itself, and in the air resounds the melancholy wild cry from which the sleeper took his name.

'Twould be mere justice; but as justice is so scarce on

earth, that it may well be rare even in Heaven, 'twere better ears attuned to the light footfall of the unshod cayuse and the soft swishing of the lodge-poles through the grass behind the travois-pony should never open.

The long-drawn cry would only break the sleeper's rest, and wake him to a world unknown and unfamiliar, where he would find no friends except the sculptured wolf.

Let him sleep on.

A HEGIRA

THE giant cypresses, tall even in the time of Montezuma, the castle of Chapultepec upon its rock (an island in the plain of Mexico), the panorama of the great city backed by the mountain range; the two volcanoes, the Popocatepetl and the Istacihuatl, and the lakes; the tigers in their cages, did not interest me so much as a small courtyard, in which, ironed and guarded, a band of Indians of the Apache tribe were kept confined. Six warriors, a woman and a boy, captured close to Chihuahua, and sent to Mexico, the Lord knows why; for generally an Apache captured was shot at once, following the frontier rule, which without difference of race was held on both sides of the Rio Grande, that a good Indian must needs be dead.

Silent and stoical the warriors sat, not speaking once in a whole day, communicating but by signs; naked except the breech-clout; their eyes apparently opaque, and looking at you without sight, but seeing everything; and their demeanour less reassuring than that of the tigers in the cage hard by. All could speak Spanish if they liked, some a word or two of English, but no one heard them say a word in either tongue. I asked the nearest if he was a Mescalero, and received the answer, "Mescalero-hay," and for a moment a gleam shone through their eyes, but vanished instantly, as when the light dies out of the wire in an electric lamp. The soldier at the gate said they were "brutes"; all sons of dogs, infidels, and that for his part he could not see why the "Gobierno" went to the expense of keeping them alive. He thought they had no sense; but in that showed his own folly, and acted after the manner of the half-educated man the whole world over, who knowing he can read and write thinks that the savage who cannot do so is but a fool; being unaware

that, in the great book known as the world, the savage often is the better scholar of the two.

But five-and-twenty years ago the Apache nation, split into its chief divisions of Mescaleros, Jicarillas, Coyoteros, and Lipanes, kept a great belt of territory almost five hundred miles in length, and of about thirty miles in breadth, extending from the bend of the Rio Gila to El Paso, in a perpetual war. On both sides of the Rio Grande no man was safe; farms were deserted, cattle carried off, villages built by the Spaniards, and with substantial brick-built churches, mouldered into decay; mines were unworkable, and horses left untended for a moment were driven off in open day; so bold the thieves, that at one time they had a settled month for plundering, which they called openly the Moon of the Mexicans, though they did not on that account suspend their operations at other seasons of the year. Cochise and Mangas-Coloradas, Naked Horse, Cuchillo Negro, and others of their chiefs, were once far better known upon the frontiers than the chief senators of the congresses of either of the two republics; and in some instances these chiefs showed an intelligence, knowledge of men and things, which in another sphere would certainly have raised them high in the estimation of mankind.

The Shis-Inday (the people of the woods), their guttural language, with its curious monosyllable "hay" which they tacked on to everything, as "oro-hay" and "plata-hay"; their strange democracy, each man being chief of himself, and owing no allegiance to anyone upon the earth; all now have passed away, destroyed and swallowed up by the "Inday pindah lichoyi" (the men of the white eyes), as they used to call the Americans and all those northerners who ventured into their territory to look for "yellow iron." I saw no more of the Apaches, and, except once, never again met any one of them; but as I left the place the thought came to my mind: if any of them succeed in getting out, I am certain that the six or seven hundred miles between them and their country

will be as nothing to them, and that their journey thither will be marked with blood.

At Huehuetoca I joined the mule-train, doing the twenty miles which in those days was all the extent of railway in the country to the north, and lost my pistol in a crowd just as I stepped into the train, some "lepero" having abstracted it out of my belt when I was occupied in helping five strong men to get my horse into a cattle-truck. From Huehuetoca we marched to Tula, and there camped for the night, sleeping in a "mesón," built like an Eastern fondak round a court, and with a well for watering the beasts in the centre of the yard. I strolled about the curious town, in times gone by the Aztec capital, looked at the churches, built like fortresses, and coming back to the mesón before I entered the cell-like room without a window, and with a plaster bench on which to spread one's saddle and one's rugs, I stopped to talk with a knot of travellers feeding their animals on barley and chopped straw, grouped round a fire, and the whole scene lit up and rendered Rembrandtesque by the fierce glow of an ocote torch. So talking of the Alps and Apennines, or, more correctly, speaking of the Sierra Madre, and the mysterious region known as the Bolson de Mapimi, a district in those days as little known as is the Sus to-day, a traveller drew near. Checking his horse close by the fire, and getting off it gingerly, for it was almost wild, holding the hair mecate in his hand, he squatted down, the horse snorting and hanging back and setting rifle and machete jingling upon the saddle, he began to talk.

"Ave María purísima, had we heard the news?" What! a new revolution? Had Lerdo de Tejada reappeared again? or had Cortinas made another raid on Brownsbille? the Indios Bravos harried Chihuahua? or had the silver "conduct" coming from the mines been robbed? "Nothing of this, but a voice ran (corría una voz) that the Apache infidels confined in the courtyard of the castle of Chapultepec had broken loose. Eight of them, six warriors, a woman and a

boy, had slipped their fetters, murdered two of the guard, and were supposed to be somewhere not far from Tula, and," as he thought, "making for the Bolson de Mapimi, the deserts of the Rio Gila, or the recesses of the mountains of the Santa Rosa range."

Needless to say, this put all in the mesón almost beside themselves; for the terror that the Indians inspired was at that time so real, that had the eight forlorn and helpless infidels appeared I verily believe they would have killed us all. Not that we were not brave, well armed—in fact, all loaded down with arms, carrying rifles and pistols, swords stuck between our saddle-girths, and generally so fortified as to resemble walking arsenals. But valour is a thing of pure convention, and these men who would have fought like lions against marauders of their own race, scarce slept that night for thinking on the dangers which they ran by the reported presence of those six naked men. The night passed by without alarm, as was to be expected, seeing that the court-yard wall of the mesón was at least ten feet high, and the gate solid ahuehuete clamped with iron, and padlocked like a gaol. At the first dawn, or rather at the first false dawn, when the fallacious streaks of pink flash in the sky and fade again to night, all were afoot. Horsemen rode out, sitting erect in their peaked saddles, toes stuck out and thrust into their curiously stamped toe-leathers; their chaparreras giving to their legs a look of being cased in armour, their poblano hats, with bands of silver or of tinsel, balanced like haloes on their heads.

Long trains of donkeys, driven by Indians dressed in leather, and bareheaded, after the fashion of their ancestors, crawled through the gate laden with pulque, and now and then a single Indian followed by his wife set off on foot, carrying a crate of earthenware by a broad strap depending from his head. Our caravan, consisting of six two-wheeled mule-carts, drawn by a team of six or sometimes eight gaily harnessed mules, and covered with a tilt made from the istle,

creaked through the gate. The great mesón remained deserted, and by degrees, as a ship leaves the coast, we struck into the wild and stony desert country, which, covered with a whitish dust of alkali, makes Tula an oasis; then the great church sank low, and the tall palm trees seemed to grow shorter; lastly church, palms and towers, and the green fields planted with aloes, blended together and sank out of sight, a faint white misty spot marking their whereabouts, till at last it too faded and melted into the level plain.

Travellers in a perpetual stream we met journeying to Mexico, and every now and then passed a straw-thatched jacal, where women sat selling "atole," that is a kind of stir-about of pine-nut meal and milk, and dishes seasoned hot with red pepper, with tortillas made on the metate of the Aztecs, to serve as bread and spoons. The infidels, it seemed, had got ahead of us, and when we slept had been descried making towards the north; two of them armed with bows which they had roughly made with sticks, the string twisted out of istle, and the rest with clubs, and what astonished me most was that behind them trotted a white dog. Outside San Juan del Rio, which we reached upon the second day, it seemed that in the night the homing Mescaleros had stolen a horse, and two of them mounting upon him had ridden off, leaving the rest of the forlorn and miserable band behind. How they had lived so far in the scorched alkali-covered plains, how they managed to conceal themselves by day, or how they steered by night, no one could tell; for the interior Mexican knows nothing of the desert craft, and has no idea that there is always food of some kind for an Apache, either by digging roots, snaring small animals, or at the last resort by catching locusts or any other insect he can find. Nothing so easy as to conceal themselves; for amongst grass eight or nine inches high, they drop, and in an instant, even as you look, are lost to sight, and if hard pressed sometimes escape attention by standing in a cactus grove, and, stretching out their arms, look so exactly like the plant that

you may pass close to them and be unaware, till their bow twangs, and an obsidian-headed arrow whistles through the air.

Our caravan rested a day outside San Juan del Rio to shoe the mules, repair the harness, and for the muleteers to go to mass or visit the poblana girls, who with flowers in their hair leaned out of every balcony of the half-Spanish, half-Oriental-looking town, according to their taste. Not that the halt lost time, for travellers all know that "to hear mass and to give barley to your beasts loses no tittle of the day."

San Juan, the river almost dry, and trickling thirstily under its red stone bridges; the fields of aloes, the poplars, and the stunted palms; its winding street in which the houses, overhanging, almost touch; its population, which seemed to pass their time lounging wrapped in striped blankets up against the walls, was left behind. The pulque-aloes and the sugar-canes grew scarcer, the road more desolate as we emerged into the "tierra fría" of the central plain, and all the time the Sierra Madre, jagged and menacing, towered in the west. In my mind's eye I saw the Mescaleros trotting like wolves all through the night along its base, sleeping by day in holes, killing a sheep or goat when chance occurred, and following one another silent and stoical in their tramp towards the north.

Days followed days as in a ship at sea; the wagons rolling on across the plains; and I jogging upon my horse, half sleeping in the sun, or stretched at night half dozing on a tilt, almost lost count of time. Somewhere between San Juan del Rio and San Luis Potosi we learned two of the Indians had been killed, but that the four remaining were still pushing onward, and in a little while we met a body of armed men carrying two ghastly heads tied by their scalp-locks to the saddle-bow. Much did the slayers vaunt their prowess; telling how in a word at break of day they had fallen in with all the Indians seated round a fire, and that whilst the rest fled, two had sprung on them, as they said, "after the fashion

of wild beasts, armed one with a stick, and the other with a stone, and by God's grace," and here the leader crossed himself, "their aim had been successful, and the two sons of dogs had fallen, but most unfortunately the rest during the fight had managed to escape."

San Luis Potosi, the rainless city, once world-renowned for wealth, and even now full of fine buildings, churches and palaces, and with a swarming population of white-clothed Indians squatting to sell their trumpery in the great market-square, loomed up amongst its fringe of gardens, irrigated lands, its groves of pepper trees, its palms, its wealth of flowering shrubs; its great white domes, giving an air of Bagdad or of Fez, shone in the distance, then grew nearer, and at last swallowed us up, as wearily we passed through the outskirts of the town, and halted underneath the walls.

The city, then an oasis in the vast plateau of Anahuac (now but a station on a railway-line), a city of enormous distances, of gurgling water led in stucco channels by the side of every street, of long expanses of adobe walls, of immense plazas, of churches and of bells, of countless convents; hedged in by mountains to the west, mouth of the "tierra caliente" to the east, and to the north the stopping-place for the long trains of wagons carrying cotton from the States; wrapped in a mist as of the Middle Ages, lay sleeping in the sun. On every side the plain lapped like an ocean, and the green vegetation round the town stopped so abruptly that you could step almost at once from fertile meadows into a waste of whitish alkali.

Above the town, in a foothill of the Sierra Madre about three leagues away, is situated the "Enchanted City," never yet fouled by the foot of man, but yet existent, and believed in by all those who follow that best part of history, the traditions which have come down to us from the times when men were wise, and when imagination governed judgment, as it should do to-day, being the noblest faculty of the human mind. Either want of time, or that belittling education from

which few can escape, prevented me from visiting the place. Yet I still think, if rightly sought, the city will be found, and I feel sure the Mescaleros passed the night not far from it, and perhaps looking down upon San Luis Potosi cursed it, after the fashion that the animals may curse mankind for its injustice to them.

Tired of its squares, its long dark streets, its hum of people; and possessed perhaps with that nostalgia of the desert which somes so soon to all who once have felt its charm when cooped in bricks, we set our faces northward about an hour before the day, passed through the gates and rolled into the plains. The mules well rested shook their bells, the leagues soon dropped behind, the muleteers singing "La Pasadita," or an interminable song about a "Gachupin"* who loved a nun.

The Mescaleros had escaped our thoughts—that is, the muleteers thought nothing of them; but I followed their every step, saw them crouched round their little fire, roasting the roots of wild mescal; marked them upon the march in single file, their eyes fixed on the plain, watchful and silent as they were phantoms gliding to the north.

Crossing a sandy tract, the Capataz, who had long lived in the Pimeria Alta, and amongst the Maricopas on the Gila, drew up his horse and pointing to the ground said: "Viva Mexico!—look at these footmarks in the sand. They are the infidels; see where the men have trod; here is the woman's print and this the boy's. Look how their toes are all turned in, unlike the tracks of Christians. This trail is a day old, and yet how fresh! See where the boy has stumbled—thanks to the Blessed Virgin they must all be tired, and praise to God will die upon the road, either by hunger or some Christian hand." All that he spoke of was no doubt visible to him, but through my want of faith, or perhaps lack of experience, I saw but a faint trace of naked footsteps in the

* It had a chorus reflecting upon convent discipline:

"For though the convent rule was strict and tight,
She had her exits and her entrances by night."

sand. Such as they were, they seemed the shadow of a ghost, unstable and unreal, and struck me after the fashion that it strikes one when a man holds up a cane and tells you gravely, without a glimmering of the strangeness of the fact, that it came from Japan, actually grew there, and had leaves and roots, and was as little thought of as a mere ash-plant growing in a copse.

At an hacienda upon the road, just where the trail leads off upon one hand to Matehuala, and on the other to Rio Verde, and the hot countries of the coast, we stopped to pass the hottest hours in sleep. All was excitement; men came in, their horses flecked with foam; others were mounting, and all armed to the teeth, as if the Yankees had crossed the Rio Grande, and were marching on the place. "Los Indios! sí, señor," they had been seen, only last night, but such the valour of the people of the place, they had passed on doing no further damage than to kill a lamb. No chance of sleep in such a turmoil of alarm; each man had his own plan, all talked at once, most of them were half drunk, and when our Capataz asked dryly if they had thought of following the trail, a silence fell on all. By this time, owing to the horsemen galloping about, the trail was cut on every side, and to have followed it would have tried the skill of an Apache tracker; but just then upon the plain a cloud of dust was seen. Nearer it came, and then out of the midst of it horses appeared, arms flashed, and then nearing the place five or six men galloped up to the walls, and stopped their horses with a jerk. "What news? Have you seen anything of the Apaches?" and the chief rider of the gallant band, getting off slowly, and fastening up his horse, said, with an air of dignity: "At the encrucijada, four leagues along the road, you will find one of them. We came upon him sitting on a stone, too tired to move, called on him to surrender, but Indians have no sense, so he came at us tired as he was, and we, being valiant, fired, and he fell dead. Then, that the law should be made manifest to all, we hung his body by

the feet to a huisaché tree." Then compliments broke out and "Vivan los valientes!" "Viva Mexico!" "Mueran los Indios salvajes!" and much of the same sort, whilst the five valiant men modestly took a drink, saying but little, for true courage does not show itself in talk.

Leaving the noisy crew drinking confusion to their enemies, we rolled into the plain. Four dusty leagues, and the huisaché tree growing by four cross trails came into sight. We neared it, and to a branch, naked except his breech-clout, covered with bullet-wounds, we saw the Indian hang. Half-starved he looked, and so reduced that from the bullet-holes but little blood had run; his feet were bloody, and his face hanging an inch or two above the ground distorted; flies buzzed about him, and in the sky a faint black line on the horizon showed that the vultures had already scented food.

We left the nameless warrior hanging on his tree, and took our way across the plain, well pleased both with the "valour" of his slayers and the position of affairs in general in the world at large. Right up and down the Rio Grande on both sides for almost a thousand miles the lonely cross upon some riverside, near to some thicket, or out in the wide plain, most generally is lettered "Killed by the Apaches," and in the game they played so long, and still held trumps in at the time I write of, they too paid for all errors, in their play, by death. But still it seemed a pity, savage as they were, that so much cunning, such stoical indifference to both death and life, should always finish as the warrior whom I saw hang by the feet from the huisaché, just where the road to Matehuala bifurcates, and the trail breaks off to El Jarral. And so we took our road, passed La Parida, Matehuala, El Catorce, and still the sterile plateau spread out like a vast sea, the sparse and stunted bushes in the constant mirage looming at times like trees, at others seeming just to float above the sand; and as we rolled along, the mules struggling and straining in the whitish dust, we seemed to lose all trace of the Apaches; and at the lone hacienda or rare villages no one

had heard of them, and the mysterious hegira of the party, now reduced to three, left no more traces of its passing than water which has closed upon the passage of a fish.

Gomez Farias, Parras, El Llano de la Guerra, we passed alternately, and at length Saltillo came in sight, its towers standing up upon the plain after the fashion of a lighthouse in the sea; the bull-ring built under the Viceroys looking like a fort; and then the plateau of Anahuac finished abruptly, and from the ramparts of the willow-shaded town the great green plains stretched out towards Texas in a vast panorama; whilst upon the west in the dim distance frowned the serrated mountains of Santa Rosa, and further still the impenetrable fastnesses of the Bolson de Mapimi.

Next day we took the road for Monterey, descending in a day by the rough path known as "la cuesta de los fierros," from the cold plateau to a land of palms, of cultivation, orange groves, of fruit trees, olive gardens, a balmy air filled with the noise of running waters; and passing underneath the Cerro de la Silla which dominates the town, slept peacefully far from all thoughts of Indians and of perils of the road, in the great caravansary which at that time was the chief glory of the town of Monterey. The city with its shady streets, its alameda planted with palm trees, and its plaza all decorated with stuccoed plaster seats painted pale pink, and upon which during both day and night half of the population seemed to lounge, lay baking in the sun.

Great teams of wagons driven by Texans creaked through the streets, the drivers dressed in a défroque of old town clothes, often a worn frock-coat and rusty trousers stuffed into cowboy boots, the whole crowned with an ignominious battered hat, and looking, as the Mexicans observed, like "pantomimas, que salen en las fiestas." Mexicans from down the coast, from Tamaulipas, Tuxpan, Vera Cruz and Guatzecoalcos ambled along on horses all ablaze with silver; and to complete the picture, a tribe of Indians, the Kickapoos, who had migrated from the north, and who occasionally

rode through the town in single file, their rifles in their hands, and looking at the shops half longingly, half frightened, passed along without a word.

But all the varied peoples, the curious half-wild, half-patriarchal life, the fruits and flowers, the strangeness of the place, could not divert my thoughts from the three lone, pathetic figures, followed by their dog, which in my mind's eye I saw making northward, as a wild goose finds its path in spring, leaving no traces of its passage by the way. I wondered what they thought of, how they looked upon the world, if they respected all they saw of civilized communities upon their way, or whether they pursued their journey like a horse let loose returning to his birthplace, anxious alone about arriving at the goal. So Monterey became a memory; the Cerro de la Silla last vanishing, when full five leagues upon the road. The dusty plains all white with alkali, the grey-green sage-bushes, the salt and crystal-looking rivers, the Indians bending under burdens, and the women sitting at the cross-roads selling tortillas—all now had changed. Through oceans of tall grass, by muddy rivers in which alligators basked, by bayous, resacas, and by "bottoms" of alluvial soil, in which grew cotton-woods, black-jack, and post-oak, with gigantic willows; through countless herds of half-wild horses, lighting the landscape with their colours, and through a rolling prairie with vast horizons bounded by faint blue mountain chains, we took our way. Out of the thickets of mezquite wild boars peered upon the path; rattle-snakes sounded their note of warning or lay basking in the sun; at times an antelope bounded across our track, and the rare villages were fortified with high mud walls, had gates and sometimes drawbridges, for all the country we were passing through was subject to invasions of "los indios bravos," and no one rode a mile without the chance of an attack. When travellers met they zigzagged to and fro like battleships in the old days striving to get the "weather gauge," holding their horses tightly by the head, and inter-

changing salutations fifty yards away, though if they happened to be Texans and Mexicans they only glared, or perhaps yelled an obscenity at one another in their different tongues. Advertisements upon the trees informed the traveller that the place to stop at was the "Old Buffalo Camp" in San Antonio, setting forth its whisky, its perfect safety both for man and beast, and adding curtly it was only a short four hundred miles away. Here for the first time in our journey we sent out a rider about half a mile ahead to scan the route, ascend the little hills, keep a sharp eye on "Indian sign," and give us warning by a timely shot, all to dismount, corral the wagons, and be prepared for an attack of Indians, or of the roaming bands of rascals who like pirates wandered on the plains. Dust made us anxious, and smoke ascending in the distance set us all wondering if it was Indians, or a shepherd's fire; at halting time no one strayed far from camp, and we sat eating with our rifles by our sides, whilst men on horseback rode round the mules, keeping them well in sight, as shepherds watch their sheep. About two leagues from Juarez a traveller bloody with spurring passed us carrying something in his hand; he stopped and held out a long arrow with an obsidian head, painted in various colours, and feathered in a peculiar way. A consultation found it to be "Apache," and the man galloped on to take it to the governor of the place to tell him Indians were about, or, as he shouted (following the old Spanish catchword), "there were Moors upon the coast."

Juarez we slept at, quite secure within the walls; started at daybreak, crossing the swiftly running river just outside the town, at the first streak of light; journeyed all day, still hearing nothing of the retreating Mescaleros, and before evening reached Las Navas, which we found astir, all lighted up, and knots of people talking excitedly, whilst in the plaza the whole population seemed to be afoot. At the long wooden tables set about with lights, where in a Mexican town at sundown an al fresco meal of kid stewed in red

pepper, tamales and tortillas, is always laid, the talk was furious, and each man gave his opinion at the same time, after the fashion of the Russian mir, or as it may be that we shall yet see done during debates in Parliament, so that all men may have a chance to speak, and yet escape the ignominy of their words being caught, set down, and used against them, after the present plan. The Mescaleros had been seen passing about a league outside the town. A shepherd lying hidden, watching his sheep, armed with a rifle, had spied them, and reported that they had passed close to him; the woman coming last and carrying in her arms a little dog; and he "thanked God and all His holy saints who had miraculously preserved his life." After the shepherd's story, in the afternoon firing had been distinctly heard towards the small rancho of Las Crucecitas, which lay about three leagues further on upon the road. All night the din of talk went on, and in the morning when we started on our way, full half the population went with us to the gate, all giving good advice; to keep a good look-out, if we saw dust to be certain it was Indians driving the horses stolen from Las Crucecitas, then to get off at once, corral the wagons, and above all to put our trust in God. This we agreed to do, but wondered why out of so many valiant men not one of them proffered assistance, or volunteered to mount his horse and ride with us along the dangerous way.

The road led upwards towards some foothills, set about with scrubby palms; not fifteen miles away rose the dark mountains of the Santa Rosa chain, and on a little hill the rancho stood, flat-roofed and white, and seemingly not more than a short league away, so clear the light, and so immense the scale of everything upon the rolling plain. I knew that in the mountains the three Indians were safe, as the whole range was Indian territory; and as I saw them struggling up the slopes, the little dog following them footsore, hanging down its head, or carried as the shepherd said in the "she-devil's" arms, I wished them luck after their hegira, planned

with such courage, carried out so well, had ended, and they were back again amongst the tribe.

Just outside Crucecitas we met a Texan who, as he told us, owned the place, and lived in "kornkewbinage with a native gal," called, as he said, "Pastory," who it appeared of all females he had ever met was the best hand to bake "tortillers," and whom, had she not been a Catholic, he would have made his wife. All this without a question on our part, and sitting sideways on his horse, scanning the country from the corner of his eye. He told us that he had "had right smart of an Indian trouble here yesterday just about afternoon. Me and my 'vaquerys' were around looking for an estray horse, just six of us, when close to the ranch we popped kermash right upon three red devils, and opened fire at once. I hed a Winchester, and at the first fire tumbled the buck; he fell right in his tracks, and jest as I was taking off his scalp, I'm dog-goned if the squaw and the young devil didn't come at us jest like grizzly bars. Wal, yes, killed 'em, o' course, and anyhow the young 'un would have growed up; but the squaw I'm sort of sorry about. I never could bear to kill a squaw, though I've often seen it done. Naow here's the all-firedest thing yer ever heard; jes' as I was turning the bodies over with my foot a little Indian dog flies at us like a 'painter,' the varmint, the condemndest little buffler I ever struck. I was for shootin' him, but Pastory—that's my kornkewbyne—she up and says it was a shame. Wal, we had to bury them, for dead Injun stinks worse than turkey-buzzard, and the dodgasted little dog is sitting on the grave, 'pears like he's froze, leastwise he hasn't moved since sun-up, when we planted the whole crew."

Under a palm tree not far from the house the Indians' grave was dug; upon it, wretched and draggled, sat the little dog. "Pastory" tried to catch it all day long, being kind-hearted though a "kornkewbyne"; but, failing, said "God was not willing," and retired into the house. The hours seemed days in the accursed place till the sun rose, gilding the

unreached Santa Rosa mountains, and bringing joy into the world. We harnessed up the mules, and started silently out on the lonely road; turning, I checked my horse, and began moralizing on all kinds of things; upon tenacity of purpose, the futility of life, and the inexorable fate which mocks mankind, making all effort useless, whilst still urging us to strive. Then the grass rustled, and across an open space a small white object trotted, looking furtively around, threw up its head and howled, ran to and fro as if it sought for something, howled dismally again, and after scratching in the ground, squatted dejectedly on the fresh-turned-up earth which marked the Indians' grave.

A PHILOSOPHER

NO one, at first sight, would have taken Miguel Saenz for a man born on an Indian frontier, or for one who in his youth had handled arms.

Short, fat, and looking as if he had been cut by an unskilful workman out of walnut wood, he wore a faded black cloth jacket and the bed-ticking trousers which so many frontier Mexicans affect. A wide and steeple-crowned *poblano* hat, stained here and there with perspiration, and girt with a heavy, sausage-like band of silver tinsel, sat like a penthouse on his head and overshadowed the whole man. His occupation in fine weather was to stand against the wall of his *jacal* wrapped in an Indian blanket, and criticize adversely the horsemen of the village as they passed, whilst not neglecting to put in a word or two more favourable as to the charms of all the girls, and speculate on those their clothes veiled from the public gaze. His business was to play on the guitar, and sing to melancholy accompaniments in do minor, wailing *jarabes* treating of love disdained, of Indian battles, and of the prowess of celebrated horses, for he was *músico*, that is to say, by strength of wrist and perseverance, and with the natural advantage of being a little deaf, he had arrived at some proficiency in what he styled his art.

As he sat nursing his guitar, and with a bland yet cunning smile upon his pock-marked face, no one would think that he had been a frontier rider, and that still, though his abdomen overhung the pommel of his saddle, that, once upon his horse, he was fixed there as firmly as a knot upon a tree. He looked out on the world through his black, wrinkled and Indian-looking eyes, tired with surveying miles of prairie for hostile "sign," and gazing out intently into the

night against attacks by the Apaches, indulgently, being aware of all its frailties and his own. "Trust not a mule or a mulata wench," he would observe, or "If a woman is a harlot and gets nothing for it, she might as well remain respectable," with other adages of a like cynical and primitive philosophy formed half the staple of his talk. These he enunciated with so much unction and such gravity that they appeared to be not only the epitome of human wisdom, but the high-water mark of his own personal experience, which he retailed half humorously, half sadly, for the behoof and guidance of the listeners, and as a sort of vade mecum to mankind.

"Weapons are necessary," he used to say, "but no one knows exactly when; therefore, your knife should come out easily, and pistol locks be kept well oiled, for fear of novelty." "Never go up to a *jacal* where dogs are thin, for he who does not feed his dogs will starve his guest," he used to say, as with an air of having proved his statement by experience. "In entering chaparral, note if the birds sit quiet on the trees, for if they fly about, be sure some one has recently passed by, and on the frontier all are enemies till they have proved themselves as friends, and so of life." "Waste not your graces on a deaf man," and "amongst soldiers and with prostitutes all compliments are held excused," and "who shall say it is the post that is at fault if the blind man did not observe it in his path," were of the flowers of his rhetoric which he bestowed upon a listening world after a glass or two either of sweet Tequila or mezcal.

Born in Chihuáhuá and having migrated up and down the Rio Grande from the Pimeria to Matamoros, and wandered with the Indians in his youth in the Bolson de Mápimi and from Mojavé to the Rio Gila, fate had at last brought him up in a backwater of frontier life in San Antonio, Texas, where, in the quarter called after his native town, he sojourned, waiting the time when he should find himself in funds to return home and end his days in peace.

In the meantime, and because, as he himself averred, it

was not good for man to live alone, he had taken to himself two wives, and induced peace between them by frequent beatings, till, as he said, they learned to love each other and live in charity and with the fear of God.

Outside his hut, built like a bird's nest, with canes and wood, and roofed with empty tins of kerosene, his saddled horse all day stood nodding in the sun, and when his master had occasion to repair in his capacity of *músico* to any merry-making, he mounted, getting to his seat as actively as in his youth, all in one motion, and taking his guitar from one of his attendant spouses, struck a slow lope, holding his instrument balanced on his thigh, and with the diapason sticking out after the fashion of a lance. "Don" Miguel Saenz—for, as he used to say, not only was the title his by right, but in Chihuáhuá the treatment (*el tratamiento*) was universal in the province—had, besides proverbs, much lore of Indian battles and of revolutions, which on occasion and with circumstance he would unpack.

Then as he sat immovable with his right hand stealing occasionally behind his back to assure himself that his revolver was in place, his dull unblinking eyes would suddenly become illuminated, and as he talked of battle, murder, rape, and sudden death, you saw the Indian blood assert itself and the inherited ferocity of centuries shine in his face, and then in spite of rusty black cloth coat, fat stomach, and ill-tuned guitar, that "Don" Miguel was not, as he would have expressed it, "one of those mules that a man can drive before him with the reins."

In early youth he had been taken up and forced into the ranks by some "pronouncing" general in Chihuáhuá, and his adventures in the revolutionary campaign, which led him up and down over the plateau of Anáhuac, furnished him with ample anecdote and opportunity for the indulging to the full of that quiet philosophic cynicism which is the characteristic of all those Mexicans who have a strain of Indian blood.

"Soldiers and harlots," he would say, "are much alike,

each give their souls for money, and their love and hate are swift, and dangerous as a tiger's leap, therefore be friends with them as if you shortly might be enemies, and do not give your arm for them to twist, or they will break it in the socket, and then laugh. Have you not seen an Indian mother catch a rabbit or a bird, and give it to her children to torment? See how she shows them how to put out its eyes with thorns, and break its wings, in order that their hearts may become steel, and that their souls may suffer others' tortures and their own, without a tear."

War in Chihuáhuá and Sonora, before the advent of "Don Profi" to the presidential throne, was not a kindergarten. No one surrendered who was not weary of his life, for if he did, the Indian mother's lessons usually made his death a boon to him. Marches were desperate in the keen air of the high plateau, and the infantry was lashed along behind the cavalry by officers with bare machetes in their hands. Those who fell out never fell in again, for, to encourage those who kept the ranks, they were incontinently shot, or if a foolish sentimentalism saved them for a time, their death was certain if a picket of the enemy came on them, even supposing that they did not die of thirst like baggage animals who sink beneath their packs.

With a cruel humorous twinkle in his eye Miguel would tell how, when the troops came to a water-hole, a guard was set to keep the over-driven infantry from drinking till they burst.

Once, as he said, when sitting on his horse, worn out and thirsty, certain men annoyed him overmuch by importuning him to be allowed to drink.

Troops, as he said, learn only by experience, so he determined to make experiment on some of them for the good guidance in the future of the rest. Beckoning up two or three, he let them drink, which they did heartily, lapping the icy water with their fevered tongues. In a few moments they were seized with violent pains, and in a little time lay down

and "died like doves" quite quietly, so that in future no one bothered him when he sat tired on his horse guarding a well.

"Our Saviour gave His life for all, and I, Don Miguel Saenz, not being born a saviour, yet saved the life of many a good soldier merely by giving this example, that is in their own persons, for discipline is as the soul of military men, and if the body perish, let but the soul be saved and all is well."

And as he said it he would chuckle fatly, and the villainy of a fat man has something unnatural and bloodcurdling, and acts upon one, as the speech of Balaam's ass, which must have been more disconcerting to its rider than all the antics of a buck-jumper.

For foreigners in general he had the easy tolerance and contempt of all inhabitants of South and West America, reckoning them up as men who cannot ride, and therefore are not to be taken seriously. For North Americans, whom he termed "Los Gringos," his feelings were more mixed; the western and therefore riding section of them, in his eyes, were worth consideration when on their horses, but their rough manners and want of knowledge of the world—on foot—induced in him an attitude half pitiful and half contemptuous. The northerners, who throughout Texas are termed "men from the States," he looked on as a man convinced of witchcraft might look upon a wizard, half in alarm, mingled with loathing, and yet with admiration of his power and wickedness.

Spaniards he called "Los Gachupines," and probably had never seen one, but seemed to think them a sort of dragons roaming about, politically inclined, scheming by night and day to take away that liberty which so few Mexicans enjoy, but which each one of them imagines that his fathers shed their blood to consecrate. Speaking himself a harsh old-fashioned jargon of Castilian, plentifully garnished with Indian words, he yet had his own theories as to diction, holding that "Gachupines" whistled like the birds, that

Germans cried, and that "Los Gringos" spoke as if attacked by syphilis.

"Los indios bravos," sat like a nightmare on his mind although in San Antonio, Texas, they were as rare as they would be in Liverpool; but having heard their war-cry in his youth, it had remained for ever in his ears, as men blown up in mines, in after years, are said never to lose a singing in their heads.

"The Indian," he said, "is such a kind of beast; you cannot kill him with a stick or stone." The animals being, as is well known to all philosophers, created solely with a view as to the easiest way a man can find of killing them. "The Indian dies hard, and when you have him wounded on the ground, do not approach at once, for no coyote better can feign death. Therefore stand still and fire upon him as he lies, twice, thrice, or even four times, until you see no twitching of the limbs when the ball strikes him. Even then be cautious, and, having lit a cigarette, keeping your eyes upon the body all the time, advance with your gun cocked, and, on arriving at the carrion, drive your knife two or three times into the heart. Then he is dead and you can glorify the Lord and take his scalp." No self-respecting frontier man, Yanqui or Mexican, who did not in those days conform to the Indian custom, as far as scalping went; and though they spoke of Indians as "savages," or as *los bárbaros* (according to their kind), themselves were to the full as great barbarians as any warrior of the Lipanes, Comanches, Coyoteros, or of the Mezcaleros, who dug for roots of wild mezcal along the shores of the Rio Gila or wandered in the deserts of the Mápimi. So that the listeners who heard the Chihuahaeño's counsels of perfection as to Indian fight, were not surprised, but testified their admiration at his wit and his "hoss-sense" by a sententious *bueno* or "jess so," according to their nationality, for to all frontier men no Indian was ever good, till he was well filled up with rifle bullets. Still, in his heart of hearts, the ex-Indian fighter, now turned half pimp and half guitar player, rather

admired the Indian though he feared him, in the same way that a fat white housekeeping shopkeeper in the East admires the Arab of the plains.

Both frontier Mexican and Eastern shopkeeper seem to see their vices and their virtues typified, and, in some measure, purified by the wild life led by their prototypes. So may a politician reading Machiavelli bring his hand down violently upon the book, and say, "This was a man indeed: to what heights might I rise if I could only frame my lies with such intelligence."

Thus would the Chihuahueño chuckle long when he read or heard of some successful Indian raid, so that it did not touch his native village, which he referred to always as *mi tierra*, looking upon it as the centre of the earth.

"Yes," he would say, "I see the thing and how it fell about. Likely enough the idiots saw a herd of horses feeding on the plain, and did not see the lumps upon their backs, which were the feet of Indians clinging to them. So they allowed them to approach, and then each horse turned a Centauro in a moment and they all were slain except the women, who would be carried off to work in the tepees.*

Books did not bulk too largely in the Chihuahueño's mind, though what he read became a portion of himself, never to be forgotten, and to be commentated on, as something which the whole world knew, just as it knew of sun and rain, of change of seasons, and the precession of the equinoxes.

The old romance called the *Twelve Peers of France* he had, bound in grey parchment, and lettered on the back by some one who preferred his own phonetic spelling of the names to the mere trifling of grammarians. It read, "Istoria de Carlo Mauno y los dose Pares." On Carlo Mauno would he often talk, saying he held him for the chief of emperors, being, as he was, a valiant man, and having killed most of the people that he met. A view of the Imperial function perhaps more

*A tepee is the tent of the Indians, it was usually made of skins.

suitable to the meridian of Baghdad than of Mexico.

"Alejandro el Mauno" with his horse Bucefālo came the next in his esteem, and from his story he would draw sage apothegms and rules for life, which gave him great consideration amongst such of his compeers as could not read, or, at the best, had learned laboriously to spell out a prayer in Latin pronounced like Spanish, and but little understood.

Riding, apparently, amongst the Greeks, held quite as high a place in public estimation as in Chihuáhuá, for it appeared a king owned Bucefālo, and, as there was no heir to the throne, put out a *bando*, offering the crown and his fair daughter's hand to the successful rider of his horse. All the *ginetes** came from far and wide, each with his *quarta*† in his hand, his legs enclosed in *chaparreras*,‡ and wearing silver spurs which made a noise as when a hailstorm falls upon a roof.

But "el caballo Bucefālo" bucked so hard that he despatched them all at the third jump, leaving them *mal parados* and with their "baptism half broken," causing them all to swear abominably, and making some of them in their disgust desert their faith and go and join the Turk.

Then appeared Alejandro, not yet El Mauno, but, as it soon was seen, with indications of his greatness, for he had armed himself for his attempt with a great bit, which weighed half an arroba, and his spurs were of the size of the tops of oil jars, all of solid plate. When Bucefālo saw his armament, he straight gave in, and Alejandro, mounting at a bound, raced him up to the king, and, stopping him, caused him to rear, so that he hung suspended for an instant over the very throne. This pleased his majesty, who at once took the bold rider to his heart, marrying him incontinently to the princess, who was wonderfully fair, and should have made him happy, but that the love of other women caused him to fall

* *Ginetes*—horsemen.

† *Quarta*—whip in Mexico.

‡ *Chaparreras* are the long leather overalls used by ranchmen.

from grace, and lose eventually his kingdom and his life.

It fell in this wise. As it so chanced, the Grecian State happened to be at war with Persia, whose king was Dărĭo, and whose daughter (name unknown) was also passing fair. After the victory, in which both Bucefălo and El Mauno performed prodigies of valour, cutting down Moors as if they had been grass, and taking many scalps, it chanced that Alejandro in his tent, being athirst, called for the Persian princess to bring him one of those beverages ("uno de estos brebages") which those infidels affect. She, having put a potent poison in the cup, brought it to Alejandro, who straight drank, and instantly swelled out enormously and ultimately burst. "Thus do we see," the Chihuahueño said, "how that the love of women is a curse, and, reading history, you may light upon things that are useful to a man as guides in life."

His learning and his skill on the guitar, together with his fund of anecdote, made him a favourite in the society in which he moved, and his companions would lament that, though he had two wives, he yet was childless, and that no son would fill his place when he slept with those Chihuahueños whose souls are twanging their guitars in paradise. A shade of sadness sometimes obscured the twinkle in his eye, when he would say, "No, señor, children I have none, neither by Carmen nor Clemencia. No Christian boy will close my eyes when they have put the *baqueano** in my hand."

Then pensively, and with an air as if his life had had its sweetness and its charm, he used to say, "I had a son once in my youth, born of an Indian woman, a Mojavé squaw, who should by now be grown to man's estate. *Carajo!* the little rogue, son of an Indian harlot, he must have taken many a Christian's scalp by this time if he has turned out such a devil as his dam."

* *Baqueano* means a guide; hence the consecrated wafer is the great *baqueano*, as it leads to heaven.

HOPE

SNOW had fallen ceaselessly for hours, blotting out all the features of the landscape, but leaving here and there the red earth, bare, upon the trail that led from San Antonio to La Bandera as it wound about between the scrub of huisache and mesquite. It lay congealed upon the half-transparent twigs of the pinched redbuds that looked as miserable as does a ruffled parrot in a cage on a cold winter's day. In the deep hollows horses thrust their muzzles into the powdery snow, and now and then beat at it with their feet impatiently, as if they thought that Nature had played some joke upon them that they found out of place. The Helotés Creek, half frozen, formed the boundary between the post-oak country that stretched out like a natural park and the low plains thick with a scrub of thorny bush. Upon the mound, shaded by a thick grove of dark pecans, a low-eaved house surrounded by a low snake-fence looked down upon the creek.

The unfamiliar snow piled on the roof gave a false air of Northern Europe, which the wild howling of the prairie wolves intensified. Inside and blinking at the fire sat the old Swabian peasants, who had emigrated years ago, and now in their old age had become rich and owned the rancho and the wide range for cattle that ran from the Helotés, to the north fork of the Pipe Creek. Their children, born Americans, had left them when they grew up, and lived, some on the Rio Grande, others in Arizona, but all of them thousands of miles away in tastes, in sentiment, and in their view of life. Hard and unsentimental, they had all received that education which their parents lacked, but the old people had preserved their pristine ignorance of modern life and wonder at the world. Gretchen and Hans they had remained to everybody,

and spoke a mixture of bad English and their native tongue. They sat and gazed into the fire, and the wreathed snow perhaps had set them thinking on their old home and life, for it was Christmas Eve, and memory stirred in their hearts.

After a silence the old man turned to his wife and said, "Gretchen, to-morrow will be Christmas Day. That Mexican who herd the sheep say it is Noche Puena, just as he saddled up his horse to go to town. It is the night of nights . . . dat night the Kings all come to Bethlehem . . . it set one thinking, eh?"

Gretchen, after a long look in the fire, rejoined, "Yes, lieber Hans, I think of many things—of the old country, of you when you was young . . . myself too, mit my yellow hair, you say was like de gold, and of our life . . . where has it gone to, so long and yet so quick, it seems as yesterday?"

Hans drew his chair across the hearth, and, taking up her hand, patted it tremulously and said, "Ach, I think too of many things; but your hair, Gretchen, still is golden, for old Hans. . . . What a night, eh? How de coyotes howl, just like the wolves in Swabia in that long time ago you speak of."

They sat holding each other's hands, till Gretchen said, "To-night the children all put out their shoes for Santa Claus . . . you will laugh, but—no, I hardly like to say it—I still have one of the wooden shoes that little Gretchen mit de golden hair was wearing long ago in the old country. . . . What if we put him out?"

The old man ran his hand affectionately over his wife's grey, wiry hair, and pinched her withered, but still rosy cheek, just as he might have done in the far-off time towards which their thoughts were straying on that night.

Rising, he walked across the room, and throwing back the shutter, looked out into the dark. The clump of tall pecans formed a vast snowy dome; in the corral the horses huddled close together with their tails to the blast, owls hooted, and the wind roared amongst the trees. "It is still snowing, and

the creek is rising; dat Mexican did well to start for town: in an hour more no one could cross," he said. "If the black schelm was a white man he'd lose the trail to San Antonio and die in the drifts; but, never fear, the devil knows his own. . . . Ah, yes, the shoe, you say—put him out then, little old fool; all we can hope for now is that Santa Claus take us for children and send us something; for what shall we hope for now, eh, little old fool? . . . Well, put him out."

All the time that he had been speaking his wife had had her head bent over a great box, and now drew out, wrapped in a piece of flannel, an old wooden shoe. She held it tenderly, but half ashamed, just as a savage might have held some fetich in his hands, after conversion to the true faith, before a missionary. Clumsily, but artistically made, somehow, out there on the Helotés Creek, removed from all tradition, and face to face with Nature, it spoke of Europe and of an older world. The pebbles of the village street had dinted it and left impressions of themselves upon the sole, just as life leaves its wrinkles on the face. As the old couple looked at it, unbidden tears rose to their eyes, and Hans stretched out a bony finger and touched it timidly, just as a man touches the face of his first child, half proudly, half in alarm at the new fetter he has forged upon his life. He said, "Ach, Gretchen, your foot was not so big then, back in those days. I tink I hear you now run like a little pony on the street." Taking the shoe, he crossed the room and, opening the door, let in the driving snow with a cold blast that made the cheap petroleum lamp flicker and jump, and set it down outside.

Gretchen had thrown new logs upon the hearth, and, drawing up her chair, said to her husband, "Come and sit down, and let us drink glass beer. I always hope for something, something that come into our life even now and make us happy . . . not that we are not happy . . . but something wonderful."

Her husband, either impressed by her simplicity—the one thing in the world impressive—or to humour her, answered

her with a smile, "Ja . . . yes, and Santa Claus, he send us something, maybe . . . at any rate to-morrow, if the trails are passable, some of the children will be here." The glare of the great logs, of hard mesquite, fell on their wrinkled faces as they sat, married by Time, before the fire. Hans, in a suit of homespun clothes, his trousers tucked into his boots, with his bald head as shiny as a billiard ball, his grey and tangled beard, red cheeks, and hands like roots of trees, looked hale and prosperous. His wife, in her bed-ticking gown confined about the waist with a broad string of tape, her feet encased in slippers down at heel, and a white cap upon her head, was thin and angular; and as she sat holding her husband's rugged hand in hers, looked like a wooden toy, made in Thuringia, in an old-time Noah's ark.

Still there was something spiritual in her face, as if the world and all its trials, toil, disappointments, and the cares of a large family had left no mark upon her soul, and as if the wrinkles on her brow were but the work of Time and went no deeper than the skin.

A German clock, brought from their home across the sea, ticked on the wall, measuring out time, as it were, in an old-fashioned Swabian way, pausing a little every now and then and whirring wheezily before it struck the hour. An air of cleanliness almost unnatural was over everything. The plates and dishes shone as if they had been varnished, in the rough wooden rack above the dresser, and chairs and tables had been beeswaxed over till they appeared to glow. The air of comfort and of home contrasted strangely with the wild night and the position of the ranche on the north fork of the Helotés Creek out on the Texan plains.

Sleep fell upon the couple sitting by the fire, and as they slept the fire burned low upon the hearth. Outside nothing was heard but the wild seething of the wind, and now and then a rush as of an avalanche in miniature, as the snow slid down from the steep roof. An hour or two slipped past, and the storm moderated. The moon shone brightly, and in the

snow the tracks of animals were seen—the small, round holes that the deer's feet had made, the footsteps of the wolves like those of a large dog, the bear's flat trail, as if a man had passed on snowshoes, revealed as on a chart their passage through the storm. The sleepers stirred uneasily, and then, awakened by the cold, sat up and looked at one another.

Hans piled fresh logs upon the fire, stamping them in position with his foot, and then, when they had warmed themselves at the red blaze, said, "Did you dream, Gretchen?" "Yes, Hans," she answered. "I dreamed a lovely dream. We were both young again and walking in a wood. You take my hand and say, 'Gretchen, I lofe you . . . your hair is golden, your lips so red, I want to kiss them.' . . . Oh, it was lovely. . . . Did you dream, Hans?"

A shadow ran across his face as he replied, "Yes, I dream too. I dream of all our struggles—how we came to America without a heller, and how we starved and fought . . . of how we slaved, and then of how we build this house. Of our first son—the one the Indians killed . . . of all the rest; and then it seemed I saw us both sit sleeping here before the fire."

"Oh, Hans!" his wife rejoined, "what for a dream was that? You have not been asleep." She paused and saw her husband really had dreamed, and then, smiling a weary smile, said, "Go, liebling schatz—this is the way I used to speak to you in the old days—and bring the shoe you put outside the door. I hope that Santa Claus may have put something in it, something wonderful."

Her husband kissed her cheek, and, gained a little by her faith, opened the door and carried in the shoe. Something was in it of a truth, for Santa Claus, who never disappoints people who trust in him, had filled it up with snow. As they stood looking at it ruefully, the long-drawn howl of a coyote sounded far out upon the plain.

A HUNDRED IN THE SHADE

THE river looked like a stream of oil flowing between the walls of dense, impenetrable woods that fringed its banks. Now and again it eddied strongly and seemed to boil, as some great rock or snag peeped up menacingly. Then it flowed on again resistlessly, bearing upon its yellow flood great trunks of Bongos or of Ceibas, as if they were but reeds. Toucans, looking as if they had been fashioned rather by Gian Baptista Porta than by nature, darted like king-fishers across its face. Parrots screeched harshly, and above the tallest trees, macaws, blue, red and orange, soared like hawks, looking as fitting to their natural surroundings as rooks in England cawing in the elms. Upon the sand-banks great saurians basked, and when they felt the passing steamer's wash, rolled into the stream, as noiselessly as water-rats in a canal.

Now and again a little clearing broke the hostile wall of the fierce-growing vegetation, with a few straw-thatched huts, a mango-tree or two, and a small patch of maize or yucca, with an unsubstantial fence of canes. Occasionally, where a stretch of plain intervened between the woods, a lean vaquero on a leaner horse, his hat blown back, forming a sort of aureole of straw behind his head, galloped along the banks after a point of steers, or merely raced the steamer for a few hundred yards and then, checking his horse, wheeled like a bird upon the wind. The steamer, painted a dazzling white, with decks piled one upon another till it looked like a floating house, belched out its thin wood smoke and panted as it fought the powerful, almost invisible current of the oily stream. Upon each side a barge was lashed, carrying a load of cattle that diminished day by day, as one was slaughtered

every morning, in full sight of its doomed fellows, whose hooves were dyed red with the blood that flowed upon the deck.

As the boat forced its way up-stream the heat grew daily greater, and the fierce glare from the surface of the water more intense. The sun set in a dull, red orb, and from the banks there rose a thin, white mist. From the recesses of the forests came the cries of wild animals, silent by day, but roused into activity at night. The monkeys howled their full-throated chorus, jaguars and wild cats snarled, and in the stillness the brushwood rustled as some nocturnal animal passed through them stealthily. Clouds of mosquitoes filled the air, rendering sleep impossible. Even the freshness of the evening seemed to wear away as night wore on, and one by one the jaded passengers sought the topmost deck-house to try to catch the breeze.

Sprawling in wicker chairs, as the steamer forged along, the great black banks of vegetation sliding towards her as she passed, the passengers, mopping themselves and killing the mosquitoes now and then with a loud slap, relapsed into a moody silence, as they sipped iced drinks. Now and then someone cursed the heat, and now and then one or another of the perspiring band would walk to the thermometer, hung between the windows of the deck-house, and then exclaim, "Jesus! a hundred in the shade." One of the group of men who looked at him as a ship-wrecked sailor might look out for a sail, said, "In the moon, you mean," and sank back on his chair with as much elasticity as a sponge thrown out of a bath rebounds upon the floor.

At last, rounding a bend, a light breeze ruffled the surface of the river and brought a little life into the men lounging in their deck-chairs. No one could think of sleep in such conditions. Talk languished after a few general remarks about the price of cattle, and the usual stories about the prowess of the horses, the best in the whole world, that everyone had owned, for general conversation usually flags

in a society of men, when women and horses have been discussed. No one spoke for a considerable time, as the steamer swept along through the dark alley of the woods, illuminated by a thousand million fire-flies flashing among the trees. The dark, blue southern sky, and the yellow waters of the stream, lighted up by the powerful port and starboard lights, appeared to frame the vessel in, and cut her off from all the world.

Without preamble, the orchid hunter, a thin, sunburned man, spectacled and bald, took up his parable. He told of having camped alone in Singapore, and being bitten on the forefinger of his left hand by some poisonous snake or other. "I had no antidote of any kind with me. My whisky bottle was quite empty. Not that I think it would have done much good had it been full, for I was so well soaked in it, I should have been obliged to drink a quart before it took effect on me. Yes, well, we orchid hunters as a rule are not teetotallers. Perhaps the damp, the solitude, or God knows what, soon drives most of us to drink. What did I do? Oh, yes, I sawed the finger off with a jack-knife. Of course it hurt; but it was just root hog or die. The worst of it is that the mosquitoes always fasten on the stump." He held up a brown mutilated hand for us to look at and then, after a long pull at his iced drink, sank back again into the silence that had become a second nature to him. Perhaps to those who practise orchid hunting it seems indecent to be talking, in the primeval silence of the woods.

To the disjointed story of the orchid hunter, that seemed to be extracted from him almost against his will, succeeded the impresario of a travelling operetta company, fluent and full of New York slang and jokes designed to please the intelligence of infant cavemen, long before wit or humour humanised the world. Withal not a bad fellow, for a man whose company, by his own confession, was half a brothel, and as difficult to drive as a whole waggon load of apes. A ranch man brought a whiff of purer air into the symposium,

and as he sat tapping his leg with an imaginary whip, his thumb turned upwards from constant using of the lasso, his soft and soothing Western voice acted as a soporific on the company. They listened half awake to a long tale about the prowess of a Flathead Indian horse, "a buck-skin and a single footer, why, that yer hoice would pick a animal out of a bunch of steers, he knowed a fat one, too, better than a human, sure he did, that little hoice."

To him succeeded a traveller in a patent medicine that would cure snakebites, shingles, coughs, colds, and rheumatism. "What about earthquakes?" ejaculated someone. "Well, my stuff doesn't lay out to stop 'em; but it does no harm to 'em, anyway, and maybe might do some good to the survivors if they took it soon enough." He told us that he had never taken it himself, preferring good, sound whisky, but added, "I am its prophet, anyhow. 'One God, one Zamolina,' as good a creed as any other as far as I can see, and one a man can hold without much danger to his conscience, as long as the stuff sells."

The laugh that greeted the exposition of the creed of the patent medicine philosopher died away, and it appeared the experiences of the company had been exhausted. Confession, no matter if auricular or *coram publico*, generally extorts confession. Seated in the shade, so that up to the moment of his speaking no one had observed him, there was a quiet man, dressed in immaculate white clothes. His hundred dollar jipi-japa hat lay beside him on the deck. Somewhere about fifty years of age, his thick, dark hair was just beginning to turn grey. Tall and athletic looking, he still had not the look of being used to frontier life, and his quiet voice and manner showed him to have received what for the want of any better word is styled education, a thing that though it can do nothing to improve the faculties, yet now and then gives them the power of self-expression, in natures previously dumb.

"I don't know why I should tell you or anybody," he said, "this tale, experience or what you like to call it, except that as

it happened to me twenty years ago to-day, it seems impersonal and as if it had occurred to some one I had known. I was young then." He paused and drew himself up a little, as a well-preserved man of fifty does when he refers to himself as old, all the time feeling women still turn round to look at him as he passes on the street. "I was young then. . . . It was in New Orleans that I met her, an English girl, living alone, *faisant la cocotte* as they say down there. I think it was in the St. Charles Hotel that I first saw her. Tall and red-haired, not too fat, not too thin, as the Arabs say when speaking of a handsome woman. What her real name was I never knew. I liked her far too well ever to wish to pry into her life. Her *nom de guerre* was Daphne Villiers, and by that name I knew and by degrees began to love her. She lived in one of those old streets that run into Lafayette Square, in the French quarter of the town. I forgot to say she spoke all languages, French, Spanish and Italian, German, and God knows what, indifferently well. A rare thing for an Englishwoman, even of her profession.

"Her rooms were furnished, not in the style you might expect, big looking-glasses, Louis Quinze chairs and tables, with reproductions of the Bath of Psyche, Venus and Cupid, French prints of women bathing, as Les Biches à la Mer, or La Puce, showing a girl of ample charms catching a flea upon her leg, but simply and in good taste. Two or three bits of china, good but inexpensive, with one fine piece of Ming, and a Rhodes plate or two were dotted here and there. Upon the walls were a few engravings of French pictures, with one or two water-colours and a pastel of herself, done, as she said, in Paris by a well-known pastelist, with the signature carefully erased. What struck me most about the rooms was a small cabinet of books. Anatole France and Guy de Maupassant, some poetry, with Adah Mencken's verses, and some manuals on china and on furniture, with Manon Lescaut, Dante's *Vita Nuova* and the *Heptameron* are what I recollect.

"There was a piano that she said 'of course is necessary in the métier,' on which she played not very well and sang French Creole songs with rather a good voice. Not having much to do at that time, I got to dropping in upon her whenever she was not engaged, not so much as a lover, but to enjoy a talk with someone whose mind did not entirely run upon the price of cotton, the sale of real estate, railway shares, dividends, the things in fact that citizens of God's Own Country chiefly converse about to the exclusion of all else. Curiously enough I was never jealous, although she often had to postpone my visits on account of her work. Of course, after the fashion of most women of her class, she always talked about 'my work.' She said she never drank except when she was working and I rather think that the use of the word kept me from being jealous, for I flattered myself she never used it when speaking of my visits to her.

"Little by little we grew almost indispensable to one another. I lent her books and literary magazines. How well I recollect bringing her *L'Imitation de Jésus* and how she laughed saying she knew it all by heart. 'Twas only then I found out that she was a Catholic; not that she cared too much for her religion, but as she said, the Mass with all there is about it, lights, incense and the tradition of antiquity, appealed to her on the æsthetic side. Yes, well, yes, I got to love her, and to look forward to our long talks on books and china, pictures and the like. I never took her out to theatres, for she said people would think that she was 'working' if they saw me with her, and she looked upon me as a friend. I like to hear her say so, for as time went on we had become quite as much friends as lovers, and I used to tell her everything that had happened to me since my last visit to her.

"She on her part used to advise me, as all women will advise the man they love. Though their advice may not be very weighty, yet a man is a fool who does not profit by it. One evening I went to see her, taking a big bunch of flowers,

and when she thanked me I said, 'Congratulate me too, this is my birthday.' To my surprise she burst out crying, and for a long time I could not make her tell me the reason of her tears. At last she said, 'I should have liked to give you something, but you know how I live and I am sure you will not take a present from me.' Nothing that I could say would pacify her, although I swore that I would value anything she gave. For a long time she sobbed convulsively, till at last, drying her tears up with a handkerchief, she smiled and coming up to me, threw her arms round my neck and said, 'I have one thing that I can give you, that belongs entirely to me, that is myself.'

"Business kept me from seeing her again for several days. The more I thought about her, the more certain it appeared I could not live without her. So on the first opportunity I sought the curious old winding street in the French quarter of the town. The house looked strangely silent, and after knocking at the door for a long time the coloured girl I knew so well opened it, crying, holding a letter and a little packet in her hand. 'Missy Daphne, she done gone away,' she said, and looked at me reproachfully, as I thought afterwards. The letter told me she had gone off to Tampico with a mining engineer, not a bad fellow, who she thought would marry her. She said she had acted for the best, for both of us, and asked me to accept the little piece of Chinese pottery I so often had admired."

The story-teller ceased his tale just as a bird stops singing, when you expect he will go on. Silence fell on the hearers. It may be some of them had had presents on their birthdays, of less value than the teller's of the tale. No one said anything except the ranch man with the directness of a simple soul, "Reckon you missed the round-up that time, friend." The story-teller nodded at him, and walking up to the thermometer, muttered, "A hundred in the shade."

THE PLAINS OF VENEZUELA

MAN has not staled their wildness, and they still stretch out along the Orinoco, the Apure, and the Arauca to the far-distant Meta, just as they first came from the Creator's hand when on the seventh day He rested from a work that He must surely now and then regret. A very sea of grass and sky, sun-scourged and hostile to mankind. The rivers, full of electric eels, and of caribes, those most ravenous of fish, more terrible than even the great alligators that lie like logs upon the sand-banks or the inert and pulpy rays, with their mortiferous barbed spike, are still more hostile than the land.

In the four hundred years the Llanos have been known to Europeans man has done little more than to endow them with herds of cattle and with banks of half-wild horses and of asses that roam upon them just as their ancestors roamed the steppes of Asia from the remotest times. Islets of stunted palm-trees break the surface of the plains, as the atolls peep up in the Pacific Ocean and also bear their palms. The sun pours down like molten fire for six months of the year, burning the grass up, forcing the cattle to stray leagues away along the river banks, or in the depths of the thick woods. Then come the rains, and the dry, calcined plains are turned into a muddy lake, on which the whilom centaurs of the dry season, paddle long, crank canoes dug from a single log.

The Llanos, with their race of half-amphibious herdsmen, but little differing in features and in hue from their ancestors, the Achagua Indians, have been the scene of great events. They have had their days of glory, when they were almost household words in Europe during the great struggle for the independence of the Spanish Colonies, a hundred years ago. At the Queseras del Medio, by their aid, Paez, Prince of Llaneros, and almost the last good lance that villainous

saltpetre has left to history, broke the cavalry of Spain. Out of the woods, sheltered behind the smoke of the dry grass they had set on fire, the saddleless, wild horsemen, half-naked, with but a rag or two tied round their bodies by a thong of hide, swooped on the uniformed, drilled, disciplined, brave, heavy-handed Spanish troopers, like the riders of the Valkyrie. Paez, himself as wild and savage in those days as any of his men, rode at their head upon a half-tamed colt. Those were not days of tactics, for personal prowess, perhaps for the last time in history, ruled everything. It must have been a glorious sight to see their charge, the flying hair, the tossing manes and tails, the dust, the shrill screams of the attacking horsemen, the answering shouts of "Viva España" of the Spanish troops, the frightened taotacos whirling above them uttering their harsh note, while in the sky the vultures sailed aloft, like specks against the sapphire blue, knowing a banquet was being set for them. To-day the Llanos that furnished the troops with which Paez so ably seconded Bolivar in his long fight for independence are almost depopulated. No one seems to know the cause.

Though much of the population has gone, enough remains to herd the cattle, the vast Llanos' only wealth. Unlike the Gauchos and the Mexicans, the Roman Butari, the Arabs of North Africa, the Western cowboy (before fell cinemas made a puppet of him), any old saddle, any clothes, content the dweller on the plains of the Apure. His horse is almost always thin, often sore-backed, and always looks uncared for, while the ungainly pace at which he rides, a shambling "pasitrote," or tied camel waddle, moving both feet on the same side at once, deprives him of all grace. Still few can equal, none excel, him for endurance. Nothing daunts him, neither the peril of the rivers, with all their enemies to mankind ever awake, to tear or numb the unlucky horseman who may come near their fangs or their electrically charged bodies or any other danger either by flood and field. He, of all wielders of the raw-hide noose, alone secures it, not to the

saddle, but to his horse's tail, fishing for, rather than lassoing a steer, playing it like a salmon with a rope a hundred feet in length, instead of bringing it up with a smart jerk, after the fashion of the Argentines or Mexicans. Abominably slow and tedious in his methods to the eyes of commentators; still it is never wise, in matters of such deep import, to criticise or to condemn customs that use and wont have consecrated.

If the Llaneros have changed outwardly, the Llano has remained the same. No puffing steam engine or petrol-reeking care defile its surface. Diligences it has never had, and the sole method for a caballero when he wants to traverse it is on a horse. Some indeed may have ridden mules. Camels and asses, with llamas, yaks, bullocks, and buffaloes, no doubt can carry man upon their backs, but on the horse alone can he be truly said to ride. So the Llanero still rides the Llano on his pacing horse, the reins held high, the stirrups dangling from his naked toe, his eyes fixed on the horizon, as a sailor, on his watch, looks out across the sea. The mirage still hangs castles in the air and cheats the eye in the terrific heat with pools of water, always just out of touch, as happiness is ever out of reach in life. The Promised Land is always a day's march ahead of us.

Unchanging and unchanged, the Llanos swelter in the sun as they first sweltered at the creation of the world, and as La Puebla saw them in the expedition that Maestre Diego Albeniz de la Cerrada describes, he who wrote, as it were in a mirage, his observation so minute, his gift of artistry so great, and with his dates, and trifles of that nature, all awry. So distant are the Llanos from our vainglorious, noisy, and evil-smelling civilisation, as to be almost unaware that such a thing exists. They await the coming of the thing called progress, just as a girl may dream about her marriage night without exactly knowing what it means.

Meanwhile, through palm woods looking exactly like those of the Argentine Gran Chaco, through jungle and through woods, in dust, in rain, under a sun that blisters, if

you touch an iron stirrup, the post of the republic carried in canvas bags on two grey mules accompanied by an apocalyptic horse, trails wearily across the plains. If in their pilgrimage the mules, the old white horse, and the dark half-breeds chance to light on a Velorio, or a wedding at a rancho on the road, they join in it, for after all to-morrow is another day, and time is certainly not money, under the rule of him whose fellow-citizens style "El Benemerito."

Even the garden by the Tigris could hardly have been fairer or more bird-haunted than the banks of the Apure, with its myriads of egrets making the trees as white as is a northern wood after a fall of snow. Legions of aquatic birds as black as jet sweep down the rivers in battalions, succeeding one another as if some feathered general was marshalling them to fight.

Flocks of flamingos rise from the waters, as Aphrodite rose up from the waves, rosy and beautiful. Piero di Cosimo alone could have dealt with them in paint, and if the painter of the "Death of Procris" had but visited the Apure, among his pelicans, his flamingos, and his swans, he would have placed new species, as fit to grace his theme and far more gorgeous than the birds of the old world. In the freshness of the dawn, when a white mist bathes all the woods upon the rivers in a thin vaporous haze through which the trees show faintly, as a rich purple or green burnous tinges the fleecy whiteness of an Arab's haik, nature exults in the new birth of day.

The Llano for a brief moment turns to a tender green and stretches out like an interminable fresh field of corn. From the recesses of the woods along the river banks comes the harsh screaming of the parrots, and birds and insects raise their morning hymn of praise. Stilled are the voices of the prowling animals of prey, insistent during night. The jaguar no longer snarls, or whets his teeth against the tree trunks. The red, howling monkeys start their chorus, sounding as if a lion was raging in the everglades, and the shy

tapir after a night passed feeding on the sedges and the grass swims to his lair, his head and back just showing, like a river horse, leaving a silvery trail behind him to mark his silent passage through the stream. Wild cattle troop back to the woods, before the vaqueros intercept them with their swift horses and their unerring noose.

Without an interval of crepuscule, the sun rises at once fierce, fiery, and inexorable, streaking the sky with rays of orange and of scarlet for an instant, then bursts upon the world like a fell enemy before whom fly all living things except the saurians, who bask somnolently upon the sand-banks, immune against his rays. Just at the break of dawn fish leap in shoals into the air, making the water boil, their silvery bodies for a moment springing like crescent moons into the air and falling with a splash into the deep. His well-greased lazo ready coiled in front of his right knee, his brown, bare toes sticking out through his alpargatas, clutching the light Llanero stirrup with its crown-like prolongation underneath the foot, the Llanero scans the horizon as his horse paces rapidly along, leaving a well-marked trail upon the dewy grass. He sits so loosely in the saddle that one would think if his horse shied it must unseat him, but that he also shies. High on his vaquero saddle, so straight and upright that a plummet dropped from his shoulder would touch his heel, he reads the Llano like a book.

Nothing escapes his sight, as keen as that of his Achagua Indian ancestors. Signs on the ground, almost undiscernible, he marks. If his horse, trippling along at its artificial gait, stumbles or pecks, he curses it, objurgating its female ancestry, gives it a sharp pull with the bit, digs in his spurs, interrupts for a moment the interminable "galerón" that he is crooning in a low voice, and pointing with his whip says, "Three horses passed along here early in the night. One is the big cream colour that always strays, for he is a little lame in the off hind foot, see where he has stepped short upon it." With an unerring eye he sights a steer with a strange brand.

"That is one of General Atilio Pacheco's animals," he says, and turning to his companion, smiling, remarks, "If he stays too long in these parts he may stay for ever, for God is not a bad man, anyhow."

As the sun rises higher in the heavens, the light distorting everything, magnifying or diminishing, according as its rays are refracted, dried tufts of grass appear as large as clumps of canes, and animals on the horizon as small as turkey buzzards. Then the vaquero heads for home, after assuring himself that no bullock has been killed by a tiger in the night, or has got wounded from any cause and requires treatment to prevent maggots from breeding in the wound. Clouds of dust rise on the horizon. The morning breeze dies out entirely during the hottest hours, and the plain shimmers in the heat. Bancos and mesas, those curious sand formations that intersect the Llanos like striations in a rock, give back refracted heat to meet the heat descending from above. All nature groans. Only the lizards and iguanas seem to revel in it. Homing vaqueros, their "pelo de Guama" hats coal-scuttled fore and aft against the enemy, lounge in their saddles. Their horses plod along, with drooping heads, too weary even to swish their tails against the flies. At the straw-thatched houses the riders get off with a sigh and seek the shade of the "caney."

As the heat waxes and the air quivers as if it came from some interior furnace, a deathly silence broods upon the plains. A sense of solitude creeps over everything, as if the world had been consumed by some unlooked-for cataclysm that had destroyed mankind. The weary horses, who endure the burden of their lives either parched with thirst, or forced to live a half-amphibious life during the periodical inundations, exposed year in, year out, to the perpetual torment of mosquitoes, horse-flies, ticks and all the "plagas" of the insect world, with the off-chance of sudden death from the fangs of tiger or caimán, seek shelter where they can, under the scanty foliage of the Moriche palms. Cattle have long ago retired as far as possible into the reedy swamps. Nothing is

stirring; not a sound breaks the afflicted silence of the sun-cursed plain, but the perpetual calling "Oh, ah ho" of the small, speckled doves. Gradually the heat decreases, a breeze springs up, and nature, after her long struggle with the sun, revives.

The animals, who have passed the hot hours under whatever shade that they could find, recommence eating and birds show signs of life. Parrots scream harshly. Flights of macaws, yellow and red and blue, the great white patches round their eyes making them look as if they all wore spectacles, soar like parti-coloured hawks, uttering their croaking cry. The interval of freshness is all too brief, for night falls without twilight on the Llanos; and the sun dips down under the horizon just as he does at sea.

Before the darkness closes in, flights of birds migrate towards the woods, fire-flies dart to and fro among the dark metallic leaves of the jungle fringing the river, and from the recesses of the forests the nightly chorus of the wild animals, silent through the day, breaks out. Then comes the miracle; the miracle of miracles, unknown to those who have not journeyed on those interminable steppes or sailed upon the Apure or the Orinoco. No words can paint the infinite gradation of the scale of colour that leaves the spectroscope lacking a shade or two. Green turns to mauve, then back to green again; to scarlet, orange, and vermilion, flinging the flag of Spain across the sky. Dark coffee-coloured bars, shooting across a sea of carmine, deepen to black; the carmine melts into pale grey. Castles and pyramids spring up; they turn to cities; the pyramids to broken arches, waterfalls, and ships, with poops like argosies. Gradually pale apple-green floods all the heaven; then it fades into jade. Castles and towns and ships and broken arches disappear. The sun sinks in a globe of fire, leaving the world in mourning for its death.

Then comes the after-glory, when all the colours that have united, separated, blended and broken up, unite and separate again, and once more blend. A sheet of flame, that for an

instant turns the Apure into a streak of molten metal, bathes the Llano in a bath of fire, fades gradually and dies, just where the plain and sky appear to join as if the grass was all aglow.

THE ORCHID HUNTER

"YOU see," the Orchid-hunter said, "this is just how it happened; one of those deaths, that I have seen so many of, here in the wilderness."

He stood upon the steamer's deck a slight, grave figure, his hair just touched with grey, his flannel Norfolk jacket, which had once been white, toning exactly with his hat and his grey eyes.

At first sight you saw he was an educated man, and when you spoke to him you felt he must have been at some great public school. Yet there was something indefinable about him that spoke of failure. We have no word to express with sympathy the moral qualities of such a man. In Spanish it is all summed up in the expression, "Un infeliz." Unlucky or unhappy, that is, as the world goes; but perhaps fortunate in that interior world to which so many eyes are closed.

Rolling a cigarette between his thin, brown, fever-stricken fingers, he went on: "Yesterday, about two o'clock, in a heat fit to boil your brain, a canoe came slowly up the stream into the settlement. The Indian paddlers walked up the steep bank carrying the body of a man wrapped in a mat. When they had reached the little palm-thatched hut over which floated the Colombian flag, that marked it as the official residence of the Captain of the Port, they set their burden down with the hopeless look that marks the Indian, as of an orphaned angel.

" 'We found this "Mister" on the banks,' they said, 'in the last stage of fever. He spoke but little Christian, and all he said was, "Doctor, American doctor, Tocatalaima; take me there."

" 'Here he is, and now who is to pay us for our work? We have paddled all night long. The canoe we borrowed. Its owner said that it gains twenty cents a day, and we want

forty cents each, for we have paddled hard to save this Mister.' Then they stood silent, scratching the mosquito bites upon their ankles with the other naked foot—a link between the *Homo sapiens* and some other intermediate species, long extinct.

"I paid them, giving them something over what they demanded, and they put on that expression of entire aloofness which the Indian usually assumes on such occasions, either because thanks stick in his gullet, or he thinks no thanks are due after a service rendered. They then went off to drink a glass or two of rum before they started on their journey home.

"I went to see the body, which lay covered with a sack under a little shed. Flies buzzed about it, and already a faint smell of putrefaction reminded one that man is as the other animals, and that the store of knowledge he piles up during his life does not avail to stop the course of Nature, any more than if he had been an orang-outang."

He paused, and, after having lit the cigarette, strolled to the bulwark of the steamer, which had now got into the middle of the stream, and then resumed:

"Living as I do in the woods collecting orchids, the moralising habit grows upon one. It is, as it were, the only answer that a man has to the aggressiveness of Nature.

"I stood and looked at the man's body in his thin linen suit which clung to every angle. Beside him was a white pith helmet, and a pair of yellow-tinted spectacles framed in celluloid to look like tortoiseshell, that come down from the States. I never wear them, for I find that everything that you can do without is something gained in life.

"His feet in his white canvas shoes all stained with mud sticking up stiffly and his limp, pallid hands, crossed by the pious Indians, on his chest gave him that helpless look that makes a dead man, as it were, appeal to one for sympathy and protection against the terror, that perhaps for him is not a terror after all; but merely a long rest.

"No one had thought of closing his blue eyes; and as we are but creatures of habit after all, I put my hand into my pocket, and taking out two half-dollar pieces was about to put them on his eyes. Then I remembered that one of them was bad, and you will not believe me, but I could not put the bad piece on his eyes; it looked like cheating him. So I went out and got two little stones, and after washing them put them upon his eyelids, and at least they kept away the flies.

"I don't know how it was, for I believe I am not superstitious, but it seemed to me that those blue eyes, sunk in the livid face to which a three or four days' growth of fair and fluffy beard gave a look of adolescence, looked at me as if they still were searching for the American doctor, who no doubt must have engrossed his last coherent thought as he lay in the canoe.

"As I was looking at him, mopping my face, and now and then killing a mosquito—one gets to do it quite mechanically, although in my case neither mosquitoes nor any other kind of bug annoys me very much—the door was opened and the authorities came in. After the usual salutations—which in Colombia are long and ceremonious, with much unnecessary offering of services, which both sides know will never be required—they said they came to view the body and take the necessary steps; that is, you know, to try to find out who he was and have him buried, for which, the heat at forty centigrade, no time was to be lost.

"A stout Colombian dressed in white clothes, which made his swarthy skin look darker still, giving him, as it were, the air of a black beetle dipped in milk, was the first to arrive. Taking off his flat white cap and gold-rimmed spectacles—articles which in Colombia are certain signs of office—he looked a little at the dead man and said, 'He was an English or American.' Then turning to a soldier who had arrived upon the scene, he asked him where the Indian paddlers were who had brought in the canoe.

"The man went out to look for them, and the hut soon was crowded full of Indians, each with his straw hat held up before his mouth. They gazed upon the body, not sympathetically, nor yet unsympathetically, but with that baffling look that Indians must have put on when first the conquerors appeared amongst them and they found out their arms did not avail them for defence. By means of it they pass through life as relatively unscathed as it is possible for men to do, and by its help they seem to conquer death, taking away its sting, by their indifference.

"None of them said a word, but stared at the dead man, just as they stare at any living stranger, until I felt that the dead eyes would turn in anger at them and shake off the flat stones.

"The man clothed in authority and dusky white returned, accompanied by one of those strange out-at-elbows nondescripts who are to be found in every town in South America, and may be best described as 'penmen'—that is, persons who can read and write and have some far-off dealings with the law. After a whispered conversation the Commissary, turning to the assembled Indians, asked them in a brief voice if they had found the paddlers of the canoe. None of them answered, for a crowd of Indians will never find a spokesman, as each one fears to be made responsible if he says anything at all. A dirty soldier clothed in draggled khaki, barefooted, and with a rusty, sheathless bayonet banging on his thigh, opened the door and said that he knew where they were, but that they both were drunk. The soldier, after a long stare, would have retreated, but the Commissary, turning abruptly to him, said: 'José, go and see that a grave is dug immediately; this "Mister" has been dead for several hours.' Then looking at the 'penman,' 'Perez,' he said, 'we will now proceed to the examination of the dead man's papers which the law prescribes.'

"Perez, who in common with the majority of the uneducated of his race had a great dread of touching a dead

body, began to search the pockets of the young man lying so still and angular in the drab-looking suit of white. To put off the dread moment he picked up the pith helmet and, turning out the lining, closely examined it. Then, finding nothing, in his agitation let it fall upon the chest of the dead man. I could have killed him, but said nothing, and we all stood perspiring, with the thermometer at anything you like inside that wretched hut, while Perez fumbled in the pockets of the dead man's coat.

"It seemed to me as if the unresisting body was somehow being outraged, and that the stiff, attenuated arms would double up and strike the miserable Perez during his terrifying task. He was so clumsy and so frightened that it seemed an eternity till he produced a case of worn, green leather edged with silver, in which were several brown Havana cigarettes.

"The Commissary gravely remarking, 'We all have vices, great or small, and smoking is but a little frailty,' told Perez to write down 'Case, 1; cigarettes, 3,' and then to go on with the search. 'The law requires,' he said, 'the identification of all the dead wherever possible.

" 'First, for its proper satisfaction in order that the Code of the Republic should be complied with; and, secondly, for the consolation of the relations, if there are any such, or the friends of the deceased.'

"Throughout the search the Indians stood in a knot, like cattle standing under a tree in summer-time, gathered together, as it were, for mutual protection, without uttering a word. The ragged soldier stared intently; the Commissary occasionally took off his spectacles and wiped them; and the perspiring Perez slowly brought out a pocket-knife, a box of matches, and a little bottle of quinine. They were all duly noted down, but still no pocket-book, card-case, letter, or any paper with the name of the deceased appeared to justify the search. Perez would willingly have given up the job; but, urged on by his chief, at last extracted from an interior pocket a letter-case in alligator skin. Much frayed and stained with

perspiration, yet its silver tips still showed that it had once been bought at a good shop.

" 'Open it, Perez, for the law allows one in such cases to take steps that otherwise would be illegal and against that liberal spirit for which we in this Republic are so renowned in the Americas. Then hand me any card or letter that it may contain.'

"Perez, with the air of one about to execute a formidable duty, opened the case, first slipping off a couple of elastic bands that held the flaps together. From it he took a bundle of American bank-notes wrapped up in tissue-paper, which he handed to his chief. The Commissary took it, and, slipping off the paper, solemnly counted the notes. 'The sum is just two thousand,' he remarked, 'and all in twenties. Perez, take note of it, and give me any papers that you may have found.' A closer search of every pocket still revealed nothing, and I breathed more freely, as every time the dirty hands of Perez fumbled about the helpless body I felt a shudder running down my back.

"We all stood baffled, and the Indians slowly filed out without a word, leaving the Commissary with Perez, and myself standing bewildered by the bed. ' "Mister," ' the Commissary said to me; 'what a strange case! Here are two thousand dollars, which should go to some relation of this unfortunate young man.'

"He counted them again, and, after having given them to his satellite, told him to take them and put them in his safe.

" 'Now, "Mister," I will leave you here to keep guard over your countryman whilst I go out to see if they have dug his grave. There is no priest here in the settlement. We only have one come here once a month; and even if there were a priest, the dead man looks as if he had been Protestant.'

"He turned to me, and saying, 'With your permission,' took his hat and left the hut.

"Thus left alone with my compatriot (if he had been one), I

took a long look at him, so as to stamp his features in my mind. I had no camera in my possession, and cannot draw—a want that often hinders me in my profession in the description of my rarer plants.

"I looked so long that if the man I saw lying upon that canvas scissor-bed should ever rise again with the same body, I am certain I could recognise him amongst a million men.

"His hands were long and thin, but sunburnt, his feet well shaped, and though his face was sunken and the heat was rapidly discolouring it, the features were well cut. I noted a brown mark upon the cheek, such as in Spanish is called a 'lunar,' which gave his delicate and youthful face something of a girlish look, in spite of his moustache. His eyebrows, curiously enough, were dark, and the incipient growth of beard was darker than his hair. His ears were small and set on close to the head—a sign of breeding—and his eyes, although I dared not look at them, having closed them up myself, I knew were blue, and felt they must be staring at me, underneath the stones. In life he might have weighed about ten stone I guess, not more, and must have been well-made and active, though not an athlete, I should think, by the condition of his hands.

"Strangely enough, there seemed to me nothing particularly sad about the look of him. He just was resting after the struggle, that could have lasted in his case but little more than thirty years, and had left slight traces on his face of anything that he had suffered when alive.

"I took the flat stones off his eyes, and was relieved to find they did not open, and after smoothing his fair hair down a little and taking a long look at the fast-altering features I turned away to smoke.

"How long I waited I cannot recollect, but all the details of the hut, the scissor canvas bed on which the body lay, the hooks for hammocks in the mud-and-bamboo walls, the tall brown jar for water, like those that one remembers in the pictures of the *Arabian Nights* in childhood, the drinking

gourd beside it, with the two heavy hardwood chairs of ancient Spanish pattern, seated and backed with pieces of raw hide, the wooden table, with the planks showing the marks of the adze that fashioned them, I never shall forget.

"Just at the door there was an old canoe, dug out of a tree-trunk, the gunwale broken and the inside almost filled up with mud. Chickens, of that peculiar mangy-looking breed indigenous to every tropic the whole world over, were feeding at one end of it, and under a low shed thatched with soft palm-leaves stood a miserable horse, whose legs were raw owing to the myriads of horseflies that clustered on them, which no one tried to brush away. Three or four vultures sat on a branch of a dead tree that overhung the hut. Their languid eyes appeared to me to pierce the palm-tree roof as they sat on, just as a shark follows a boat in which there is a dead man, waiting patiently.

"Over the bluff, on which the wretched little Rancheria straggled till it was swallowed up in the primeval woods, flowed the great river, majestic, yellow, alligator-haunted, bearing upon its ample bosom thousands of floating masses of green vegetation which had slipped into the flood.

"How long I sat I do not know, and I shall never know, but probably not above half an hour. Still, in that time I saw the life of the young man who lay before me. His voyage out; the first sight of the tropics; the landing into that strange world of swarthy-coloured men, dank vegetation, thick, close atmosphere, the metallic hum of insects, and the peculiar smell of a hot country—things which we see and hear once in our lives, and but once only, for custom dulls the senses, and we see nothing more. Then the letters home, simple and child-like in regard to life, but shrewd and penetrating as regards business, after the fashion of the Northern European or his descendants in the United States.

I saw him pass his first night in the bare tropical hotel, under a mosquito-curtain, and then wake up to all the glory of the New World he had discovered for himself, as truly as

Columbus did when he had landed upon Guanahani on that eventful Sunday morning and unfurled the flag of Spain. I heard him falter out his first few words in broken Spanish, and saw him take his first walk, either by the harbour, thronged with its unfamiliar-looking boats piled up with fish and fruits unknown in Europe, or through the evil-smelling, badly-paved alleys in the town.

"The voyage up the river, with the first breath of the asphyxiating heat; the flocks of parrots; the alligators, so like dead logs, all basking in the sun; the stopping in the middle of the night for wood beside some landing-place cut in the jungle, where men, naked but for a cloth tied round their loins, ran up a plank and dumped their load down with a half-sigh, half-yell—I saw and heard it all. Then came the arrival at the mine or rubber station, the long and weary days, the fevers, the rare letters, and the cherished newspapers from home—those, too, I knew of, for I had waited for them often in my youth.

"Most of all, as I looked on him and saw his altering features, I thought of his snug home in Massachusetts or Northumberland, where his relations looked for letters on thin paper, with the strange postmarks, which would never come again. How they would wonder in his home, and here was I looking at the features that they would give the world to see, but impotent to help."

He stopped, and, walking to the bulwarks, looked up the river, and said: "In half an hour we shall arrive at San Fulgencio. . . . They came and fetched the body, and wrapped it in a white cotton sheet—for which I paid—and we set off, followed by the few storekeepers, two Syrians and a Portuguese, and a small crowd of Indians.

"There was no cemetery—that is to say, not one of those Colombian cemeteries fenced with barbed wire, in which the plastered gateway looks like an afterthought, and where the iron crosses blistering in the sun look drearier than any other crosses in the world.

"Under a clump of Guaduas—that is the name they give to the bamboo—there was a plot of ground fenced in with canes. In it the grave was dug amongst some others, on which a mass of grass and weeds was growing, as if it wished to blot them out from memory as soon as possible.

"A little wooden cross or two, with pieces of white paper periodically renewed, affirmed that Resurrección Venegas or Exaltación Machùca reposed beneath the weeds.

"The grave looked hard and uninviting, and as we laid him in it, lowering him with a rope made of lianas, two or three macaws flew past, uttering a raucous cry.

"The Commissary had put on a black suit of clothes, and Perez had a rusty band of cloth pinned round his arm. The Syrians and the Portuguese took off their hats, and as there was no priest the Commissary mumbled some formula; and I, advancing to the grave, took a last look at the white sheet which showed the angles of the frail body underneath it, but for the life of me I could not say a word, except 'Good-bye.'

"When the Indians had filled in the earth we all walked back towards the settlement perspiring. I took a glass of rum with them, just for civility . . . I think I paid for it . . . and then I gathered up my traps and sat and waited under a big Bongo-tree until the steamer came along."

A silence fell upon us all, as sitting in our rocking-chairs upon the high deck of the stern-wheel steamer, we mused instinctively upon the fate of the unknown young Englishman, or American. The engineer from Oregon, the Texan cow-puncher going to look at cattle in the Llanos de Bolivar, and all the various waifs and strays that get together upon a voyage up the Magdalena, no doubt each thought he might have died, just as the unknown man had died, out in the wilderness.

No one said anything, until the orchid-hunter, as the steamer drew into the bank, said: "That is San Fulgencio. I go ashore here. If any of you fellows ever find out who

the chap was, send us a line to Barranquilla; that's where my wife lives.

"I am just off to the Choco, a three or four months job. . . . Fever?—oh, yes, sometimes, of course, but I think nothing of it. . . . Quinine?—thanks, yes, I've got it. . . . I don't believe in it a great deal. . . . Mosquitoes? . . . no, they do not worry me. A gun? . . . well, no, I never carry arms . . . thanks all the same. . . . I was sorry, too, for that poor fellow; but, after all, it is the death I'd like to die myself. . . . No, thanks, I don't care for spirits. . . . Good-bye to all of you."

We waved our hands and crowded on the steamer's side, and watched him walking up the bank to where a little group of Indians stood holding a bullock with a pack upon its back.

They took his scanty property and, after tying it upon the ox, set off at a slow walk along a little path towards the jungle, with the grey figure of our late companion walking quietly along, a pace or two behind.

LA PAMPA

ALL grass and sky, and sky and grass, and still more sky and grass, the Pampa stretched from the *pajonales* (lowlands) on the western bank of the Paraná right to the stony plain of Uspallata, a thousand miles away.

It stretched from San Luis de la Punta down to Bahía Blanca, and again crossing the Uruguay, comprised the whole republic of that name and a good half of Rio Grande, then with a loop took in the *misiones* both of the Paraná and Paraguay.

Through all this ocean of tall grass, green in the spring, then yellow, and in the autumn brown as an old boot, the general characteristics were the same.

A ceaseless wind ruffled it all and stirred its waves of grass. Innumerable flocks and herds enamelled it, and bands of ostriches (Mirth of the Desert, as the Gauchos called them) and herds of palish-yellow deer stood on the tops of the *cuchillas* (ranges of hills) and watched you as you galloped past.

Down in the south, the Patagonian hare, *mataco*, and the *quiriquincho* scudded away or burrowed in the earth. Towards the middle region of this great galloping ground, the greatest that God made . . . perhaps He could not possibly have made a better, even had He tried . . . great *armadillos* and *iguanas* showed themselves, and in the north, around the deep metallic-toned *isletas* of hard-wood *montes* (forests), flocks of macaws—red, yellow and bright blue—floated like butterflies. Up in the north, ant-eaters (the Tamandua of the Guaranis) and tapirs wandered, looking as if they had escaped from out the Ark.

Over the whole extent the "tero-tero" (a bird) hovered, screamed, whistled and circled just above your horse's head.

From every *monte* and from every maize field flew chattering flocks of parakeets.

Tigers and pumas inhabited the woods, right from the Estero Nembuco, which I have crossed so often with the mud and water to my horse's cinch, down to the Antarctic beech forests of Sandy Point.

In all the rivers *nutrias* and *lobos* and the *carpincho* (water hog), with its great red teeth, swam with their heads awash, laid flat upon the stream, just like a seal at sea.

Viscachas burrowed, and wise, solemn little owls sat at the entrance of their burrows making pretence to guard them, as does a sentinel before a palace door.

Locusts occasionally visited the Pampa, blackening the sun, devouring all the crops, and disappearing just as they had come.

"Where is the *manga?*" (swarm) was a familiar question on the plains, and grave and bearded men reined in their horses, their ponchos suddenly clinging to their sides, just as a boat's sail clings around the mast when it has lost the wind, and pointing with a lean, brown finger stained with tobacco juice, replied: "*Por allacito, en los Porongos,*" (Thereabouts in the . . .), and then departed, just as ships speak each other on the sea. The north wind filled the air with cottony filaments, and the pampero, roaring like a whole *rodeo* (round-up) that had taken fright, levelled the houses and the grass. The air was full in summer of a perpetual twittering of insects that hung invisible, whilst in the winter the white hoar-frost in early morning silvered the grass, and hung congealed upon the tops of stakes, just as it did in the old world in which the poet-king penned the "Cantar de los Cantares," two thousand years ago.

All that, was what the Pampa had inherited from nature. When I first knew it, it looked just as it must have looked on the morning of the seventh day in far-off Nabothea, that old-world Entre-Rios, when the Creator rested and, looking earthwards, saw that it was good.

Man had but little altered it, but for a peach grove here and there, a white *estancia* house, or a straw-coloured *rancheria* or *pulperia*, built either at the pass of some great river or on a hill, as that at the Cuchilla de Peralta, by which the mule-trail, used since the Conquest, led, winding upon its way towards Brazil.

Men passed each other seated upright on their *recaos* (sheepskin saddles) driving their horses in a bunch in front of them, swinging their whips around their heads.

They passed, shouting a salutation, or if too far off to be heard, waving a hand, and sank into the plain just as a vessel sinks into the sea, the body of the horse first disappearing, then the man, poncho, and, last of all, his hat. The waves of grass appeared to swallow him, and as men rode they kept their eyes fixed on the horizon or, if at night, upon a star. When the night caught them on the plains, after first hobbling the mare, they tied a horse to a long *soga* (rope), making, if neither stick nor bone were to be found, a knot in the rope's end, stamping it in, and lying down upon it.

They smoked a cigarette or two, looked at the stars a little, and took good care to place their heads in the direction towards which they had to journey, for in the mists of sunrise nothing was easier than to mistake the point you aimed at, and wander back upon the trail.

In that green ocean, as the proverb said, "he who wanders from the trail is lost"; and it was true enough, as many a heap of bones, to which a shred of tattered cloth still clung, most amply testified, as you came on them on a gallop, looking perhaps for horses stolen or strayed. Your companion might or might not rein up his horse, but certainly would point in passing, and remark: "See where the grass grows rank around the bones; there has a Christian died."

"Christian" was used more as a racial than a religious term, the Indians usually being called *Los Bravos*, *Los Infieles*, *Los Tapes*, the latter usually applied either to the descendants of the Charruas in the Banda Oriental, or to the Indian Mansos

of the Missions of the north. How much the aforesaid *Infieles* and the *Tapes* had left their impress on the speech and the life of the Gauchos, might be seen by the national costume of the *poncho* and the *chiripá* (cloth worn instead of trousers). These, as the early writers tell us, were adapted from the "Infidel we found dwelling in all these plains, when first Don Pedro de Mendoza came with his following to conquer for his lord, and to proclaim the glory of the name of Him who, though born in a stable, is higher than all kings." In the current Pampa speech the words *bagual*, *ñandu*, *ombú* and *vincha*, *tatu*, *Tacuara* and *bacaray*, with almost all the names of plants, of shrubs and trees, recalled the influence of the Indians, the Quichuas and Guaranis, the Pampas and Tehuelches, Charruas, and the rest of those who once inhabited the land.

Las boleadoras, known to the Gauchos as *Las tres Marias*, was the distinctive weapon of the southern plains. With them the Indians slew many of Don Pedro de Mendoza's men at the first Christianising of the River Plate, and with them also did the fierce Gaucho troops who rose under Elio and Liniers crash in the skulls of various English, Luteranos—for so the good Dean Funes styles them in his history—who under Whitelock had attacked the town. Only upon the Pampa, in the whole world, was this tremendous weapon ever known. None of the Pampa tribes used bows and arrows, for with them the *bolas*, and in especial the single stone, fixed to a plaited thong of hide, and called *la bola perdida*, quite supplied their place.

In fact, for no land but the Pampa, that is, in the Americas (for it could well be used in Africa and Asia), are *las tres Marias* fit. In North America the plains are bushy or the grass is long as hay, conditions which would militate against the throwing of a weapon which, often thrown a yard or two behind the quarry's legs, sprang from the ground and then entangled them.

Nothing could be more typical of the wild life of forty

years ago upon the plains than was the figure of a Gaucho dressed in his *poncho* and his *chiripá*, his naked toes clutching the stirrups, his long iron spurs kept in position by a thong of hide, dangling below his heels, his hair bound back by a red silk handkerchief, his eyes ablaze, his silver knife passed through his sash and *tirador* (belt), and sticking out just under his right elbow, his *pingo* (horse) with its mane cut into castles; and its long tail floating out in the breeze as, twisting *las tres Marias* round his head, he flew like lightning down a slope, which the mere European horseman would have looked on as certain death, intent to "ball" one of a band of fleet *ñandus* all sailing down the wind.

Letting the *bolas* go, so easily, it seemed as if his will and not his hand directed them, they hurtled through the air, revolving on their own axis sixty or seventy yards, and, when the *sogas* (ropes) met the ostriches' neck, the centrifugal force being averted, the balls fell down and, wrapping tightly round the legs, soon threw the giant bird upon its side. Ten or twelve bounds brought up the hunter, who, springing from his saddle, his huge iron spurs clanking like fetters on the ground, either put hobbles on his horse, or if he felt quite sure of him, threw the long reins upon the ground, confident that it, trained by experience to know a step upon the reins involved a pull upon the mouth, would stand obediently.

Then, drawing his *facón* (knife), the Gaucho either stuck it deeply into the bird, low down upon the breast, or if occasion served, drawing a spare set of *boleadoras* from around his waist, or taking them from underneath the *cojinillo* (sheepskin) of the *racao* (saddle), crashed in his victim's skull. Sometimes, indeed, with a *revés* (back-hand stroke) of the *facón* (big knife) they used to cut the ostrich's head off at a blow; but this wanted a sharp and heavy knife, and an arm with which to wield it strong beyond ordinary.

I have seen a Gaucho, hunting wild colts, or ostriches, in the very action of swinging the *bolas* round his head, have

his horse fall with him, alight upon his feet, and without losing the command of the direction of his swing, catch his own horse as it, springing to its feet, was just about to leave him helpless afoot upon the plains.

Afoot upon the plains . . . that was indeed a phrase of fear upon the Pampas of the south. No mariner afloat upon the waves, his mainstay but a little boat, was in a worse condition than the man who, from some cause or other, found himself horseless in the vast sea of grass.

From having been as free as is a bird, he instantly became as helpless as the same bird with a wing broken by a shot.

If cattle saw him, they not infrequently attacked him, when his one chance of safety (on the open plains) was to lie down and, simulating death, to let them smell him, which, when they had done, if he lay still enough, they turned and went away. When the pedestrian approached a house the troop of dogs that every Gaucho kept surrounded him like wolves, barking and snapping at his legs if it were daytime, or falling on him literally like wolves if it should happen to be dark. Small streams, which generally had muddy bottoms, and through which his horse had plunged, sinking down to the cinch, but always getting through, to the man afoot became impassable, making him wander up and down their banks, perhaps for miles, till he could find a "pass."

If by an evil chance he lost his way his fate was sealed, especially upon that portion where distances were great between *estancias*, and where marauding Indians on a *malón* (war-path) would kill him if they saw him, just as a boy kills a young bird when it runs fluttering across his path. To lose one's horse and saddle was worse than bankruptcy; in fact, was so considered, as in the story of a Frenchman who seeing a Gaucho standing idly about, inquired why he did not go out and work.

"Work, *madre mía*," said the man, "how can I work when I am bankrupt?"

"What then," the Frenchman said, "you have been in

commerce, and fallen upon a bad affair; poor man, I pity you." The Gaucho stared at him, and answered: "In commerce—never in my life, but at a *pulpería* (store) some Infidel or other stole my horse and saddle, with *lazo*, *bolas* and a *cojinillo* (sheep-skin) that I bought up in Rioja, and left me without shade."

Poor man, how could he work, afoot and saddleless? No doubt before the Conquest men crossed the plains afoot; but painfully, taking perhaps long years to go from the Atlantic to the Andes, groping along from stream to stream, as the first navigators felt their way from cape to cape, coasting along the bays.

The coming of the horse gave a new life to the vast plains; for nature seemed to welcome horses once again, from the long interval between the times in which the Tertian eight-footed horse roamed on the Pampas, which now are populated by the descendants of the thirteen mares and the three stallions that Pedro de Mendoza left behind when he sailed back to Spain, after his first attempt to colonise.

This is the way I recollect it. First came short grasses, eaten close down by sheep, then thistles that grew as high as a man's head, a wilderness, through which the cattle had made a labyrinth of paths; then coarser grasses, and by degrees wiry, brown bents, until at length almost all sign of grass was lost, where the Pampas joined the stony plains of Patagonia in the south.

Northwards, the waving grasses also grew sparser, till in the Jesuit Missions, clumps of *yatais* encroached upon the plains, which ended finally in the dense woods of Paraguay.

Silence and solitude were equally the note of north and south, with a horizon bounded by what a man could see when sitting on his horse.

There were few landmarks, but in the southern and the middle districts a dark *ombú* (a shady tree), standing beside some lone *tapera* (hut) and whose shade fell on some *rancho* or *estancia*, although the proverb said: "The house shall

never prosper upon whose roof is thrown the shade of the *ombú*."

Well did the ancient Quichuas name the plains, with the word signifying "space," for all was spacious—earth, sky, the waving continent of grass; the enormous herds of cattle and of horses; the strange effects of light; the fierce and blinding storms and, above all, the feeling in men's minds of freedom, and of being face to face with nature, under those southern skies.

THE CAPTIVE

SOMEHOW or other none of the camp could sleep that night. It may have been that they were hungry, for they were just returning from a bootless attempt to overtake a band of Indians who had carried off the horses from an *estancia** on the Napostá. Night had fallen on them just by the crossing of a river, where a small grove of willows had given them sufficient wood to make a fire, for nothing is more cheerless than the fierce transient flame ("like a nun's love") that cow-dung and dry thistle-stems afford. Although they had not eaten since the morning, when they had finished their last strips of *charqui*,† they had a little *yerba*,‡ and so sat by the fire passing the *mate*§ round and smoking black Brazilian cigarettes.

The stream, either a fork of the Mostazas or the head waters of the Napostá itself, ran sluggishly between its banks of rich alluvial soil. Just at the crossing it was poached into thick mud by half-wild cattle and by herds of mares, for no one rode where they were camped in those days but the Indians, and only they when they came in to burn the settlements. A cow or two which had gone in to drink and remained in the mud to die, their eyes picked out by the *caranchos*,‖ lay swelled to an enormous size, and with their legs sticking out grotesquely, just as a soldier's dead legs stick out upon a battlefield.

From the still, starry night the mysterious noises of the desert rose, cattle coughed dryly as they stood on rising ground, and now and then a stallion whinnied as he rounded

Estancia—estate.

†*Charqui*—dried meat.

‡*Yerba*—Paraquayan tea leaves.

§*Mate*—the gourd in which *yerba* is served.

‖*Caranchos*—birds resembling hawks.

up his mares. *Vizcachas** uttered their sharp bark and *tuco-tucos*† sounded their metallic chirp deep underneath the ground. The flowers of the *chañar* gave out their spicy scent in the night air, and out beyond the clumps of *piquillin* and *molle*, the pampa grass upon the river-bank looked like a troop of ostriches in the moon's dazzling rays.

The Southern Cross was hung above their heads, Capella was just rising, and from a planet a yellow beam of light seemed to fall into the rolling waves of grass, which the light wind just stirred, sending a ghostly murmur through it, as if the sound of surf upon some sea which had evaporated thousands of years ago was echoing in the breeze.

A line of sand-hills ran beside the stream. Below their white and silvery sides the horses, herded by a man who now and then rode slowly to the fire to light a cigarette, grazed on the wiry grass. The tinkling bells of the *madrinas* (bell-mares) had been muffled, as there was still a chance the Indians might have cut the trail, and now and then the horse guard cautiously crawled up the yielding bank and gazed out on the plain, which in the moonlight looked like a frozen lake.

Grouped round the fire were most of the chief settlers on the *Sauce Grande*, *Mostazas*, and the *Napostá*.

The brothers Milburn, who had been merchant sailors, dressed in cord breeches and brown riding-boots, but keeping, as it were, a link with ships in their serge coats, were there, sitting up squarely, smoking and spitting in the fire.

Next to them sat Martin Villalba, a wealthy cattle-farmer and major in the militia of Bahía Blanca. No one had ever seen him in his uniform, although he always wore a sword stuck underneath the girth of his *recao* (saddle). The light shone on his Indian features and was reflected back from his long hair, which hung upon his shoulders as black and glossy

* *Vizcachas*—animals resembling prairie dogs.

† *tuco-tucos*—a kind of mole.

as the feathers of a crow. As he sat glaring at the blaze he now and then put up his hand and listened, and as he did so, all the rest of those assembled listened as well, the man who had the *mate* in his hand holding it in suspense until Villalba silently shook his head, or murmuring: "It is nothing," began to talk again. Spaniards and Frenchmen sat side by side with an Italian, one Enrique Clerici, who had served with Garibaldi in his youth, but now was owner of a *pulpería* (pampa store) that he had named "The Rose of the South," and in it hung a picture of his quondam leader, which he referred to as "my saint."

Claraz, the tall, black-bearded Swiss, was there. He had lost one finger by a tiger's bite in Paraguay, and was a quiet, meditative man who had roamed all the continent, from Acapulco down to Punta Arenas, and hoped some day to publish an exhaustive work upon the flora of the Pampa, when, as he said, he found a philanthropic publisher to undertake the loss.

The German, Friedrich Vögel, was bookkeeper at an *estancia* called *La Casa de Fierro*, but being young and a good horseman had joined the others, making a contrast to them as he sat beside the fire in his town clothes, which, though they were all dusty and his trouser-legs coated thick with mud, yet gave him the appearance of being on a picnic, which a small telescope that dangled from a strap greatly accentuated. Since he had started on the trail eight or nine days ago, he had Hispaniolised his name to Pancho Pájaro, which form, as fortune willed it, stuck to him for the remainder of his life in South America. Two cattle-farmers, English by nationality, known as *El Facon Grande* and *El Facón Chico* from the respective sizes of the knives they carried, talked quietly, just as they would have talked in the bow-window of a club, whilst a tall, grey-haired Belgian, handsome and taciturn, was drawing horses' brands with a charred mutton-bone as he sat gazing in the fire. Of all the company he alone kept himself apart, speaking but seldom, and though he had

passed a lifetime on the plains, he never adventured his opinion except men asked for it, when it was taken usually as final, for everybody knew that he had served upon the frontier under old General Mancilla in the Indian wars.

A tall, fair English boy, whose hair, as curly as the wool of a merino sheep, hung round his face and on his neck after the fashion of a Charles II wig, was nodding sleepily.

Exaltación Medina, tall, thin and wiry, tapped with his whip upon his boot-leg, on which an eagle was embroidered in red silk.

He and his friend, Florencio Freites, who sat and picked his teeth abstractedly with his long silver-handled knife, were gauchos of the kind who always rode good horses and wore good clothes, though no one ever saw them work, except occasionally at cattle-marketings. They both were *Badilleros*, that is, men from Bahía Blanca, and both spoke Araucano,* having been prisoners amongst the Infidel, for their misfortunes as they said, although there were not wanting people who averred that their connection with the Indians had been in the capacity of renegades by reason of their crimes.

Some squatted cross-legged like a Turk, and some lay resting on their elbows, whilst others, propped against their saddles, sat with their eyes closed, but opened them if the wind stirred the trees, just as a sleeping cat peers through its eyelids at an unusual noise.

When the last *mate* had been drunk and the last cigarette end flung into the blazing brands and yet a universal sleeplessness seemed to hang in the air, which came in fierce, hot gusts out of the north, carrying with it a thousand cottony filaments which clung upon the hair and beards of the assembled band, Claraz suggested that it might be as well if someone would tell a story, for it was plain that, situated as they were, no one could sing a song. Silence fell on the group, for most of those assembled there had stories that they did not care to tell. Then the mysterious impulse that invariably directs

*The language of the Arancano Indians.

men's gaze towards the object of their thoughts turned every eye upon the Belgian, who still was drawing brands on the white ashes of the fire with the burnt mutton-bone. Raising his head he said: "I see I am the man you wish to tell the story, and as I cannot sleep an atom better than the rest, and as the story I will tell you lies on my heart like lead, but in the telling may perhaps grow lighter, I will begin at once."

He paused, and taking off his hat, ran his hands through his thick, dark hair, flecked here and there with grey, hitched round his pistol so that it should not stick into his side as he leaned on his elbow, and turning to the fire, which shone upon his face, set in a close-cut, dark-brown beard, slowly began to speak.

"Fifteen—no, wasn't it almost sixteen years ago—just at the time of the great Indian, Malon—invasion, eh? the time they got as far as Tapalquén and burned the *chacras* (farms) just outside Tandil, I was living on the Sauce Chico, quite on the frontier. . . . I used to drive my horses into the corral at night and sleep with a Winchester on either side of me. My nearest neighbour was a countryman of mine, young . . . yes, I think you would have called him a young man then. An educated man, quiet and well-mannered, yes, I think that was so . . . his manners were not bad.

"It is his story I shall tell you, not mine, you know. Somehow or other I think it was upon an expedition after the Indians, such as ours to-day, he came upon an Indian woman driving some horses. She had got separated from her husband after some fight or other, and was returning to the tents. She might have got away, as she was riding a good horse . . . piebald it was, with both its ears slit, and the cartilage between the nose divided to give it better wind. Curious the superstitions that they have." Florencio Freites looked at the speaker, nodded and interjected: "If you had lived with them as long as I have you would say so, my friend. I would give something to slit the cartilage of some of their

Indian snouts. . . . " No one taking up what he had said, he settled down to listen, and the narrator once again began.

"Yes, a fine horse that piebald, I knew him well, a little quick to mount, but then that woman rode like a gaucho—as well as any man. As I was saying, she might have got away—so said my friend—only the mare of her *tropilla* (troop) had not long foaled, and either she was hard to drive or the maternal instinct in the woman was too strong for her to leave the foal behind . . . or she had lost her head or something—you can never tell. When my friend took her prisoner, she did not fight or try to get away, but looked at him and said in halting Spanish: 'Bueno, I am take prisoner, do what you like.' My friend looked at her and saw that she was young and pretty, and that her hair was brown and curly, and fell down to her waist. Perhaps he thought—God knows what he did think. For one thing, he had no woman in his house, for the last, an Italian girl from Buenos Aires, had run off with a countryman of her own, who came round selling saints—a *santero*, eh? As he looked at her, her eyes fell, and he could have sworn he saw the colour rise under the paint daubed on her face, but he said nothing as they rode back towards his rancho, apart from all the rest. They camped upon the head waters of the Queqúen Salado, and to my friend's astonishment, when he had staked out his horse and hers and put the hobbles on her mare, so that her *tropilla* might not stray, she had lit the fire and put a little kettle on to boil. When they had eaten some tough *charqui* (dried meat), moistened in warm water, she handed him a *mate* and stood submissively filling it for him till he had had enough. Two or three times he looked at her, but mastered his desire to ask her how it was that she spoke Spanish and why her hair was brown.

"As they sat looking at the fire, it seemed somehow as if he had known her all his life, and when a voice came from another fire, 'You had better put the hobbles on that Indian

mare, or she'll be back to the *querencia** before the moon is down,' it jarred on him, for somehow he vaguely knew his captive would not try to run away.

"So with a shout of 'All right, I'll look out,' to the other fires, he took his saddle and his ponchos, and saying to the Indian woman, 'Sleep well, we start at daybreak,' left her wrapped up in saddle-cloths, with her feet towards the fire. An hour before the dawn the camp was all astir, but my friend, though an early riser, found his captive ready, and waiting with a *mate* for him, as soon as he got up and shook the dew out of his hair, and buckled on his spurs.

"All that day they rode homewards, companions leaving them at intervals, as when they struck the Saucecito, crossed the Mostazas, just as it rises at the foot of the Sierra de la Ventana, or at the ruined rancho at the head waters of the Napostá. Generally, as the various neighbours drove their *tropillas* off, they turned and shouted farewell to the Indian woman and my friend, wishing them a happy honeymoon or something of the kind. He answered shortly, and she never appeared to hear, although he saw that she had understood. Before they reached his rancho he had learned a little of the history of the woman riding by his side. She told him, as Spanish slowly seemed to make its way back to her brain, that she was eight-and-twenty, and her father had been an *estanciero* (the owner of a ranch) in the province of San Luis; who with her mother and her brothers had been killed in an invasion of the Indians eight years ago, and from that time she had lived with them, and had been taken by a chief whose name was Huinchan, by whom she had three sons. All this she told my friend mechanically, as if she had been speaking of another, adding: 'The Christian women pass through hell amongst the *Infidel*.'" The narrator paused to take a *mate*, and Anastasio sententiously remarked: "Hell, yes, double-heated hell: do you remember, Ché, that Chilian girl you bought from that Araucan whose eye one of the Indian girls

Querencia—a horse's home region.

gouged out?" His friend Florencio showed his teeth like a wolf and answered: "Caspita, yes; do you remember how I got even with her? Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, as I once heard a priest say was God's law!" The *mate* finished, the Belgian once again took up his tale.

"When my friend reached his home he helped his captive off her horse, hobbled her mare, and taking her hand led her into the house and told her it was hers.

"She was the least embarrassed of the two, and from the first took up her duties as if she had never known another life.

"Little by little she laid aside her Indian dress and ways, although she folded carefully and laid by her *chamál*, with the great silver pin shaped like a sun that holds it tight across the breast. Her ear-rings, shaped like an inverted pyramid, she put aside with the scarlet *fichú* that had bound her hair, which when she was first taken hung down her back in a thick mass of curls that had resisted all the efforts of the Indian women, aided by copious dressings of melted ostrich fat, to make straight like their own. Timidly she had asked for Christian clothes, and by degrees became again a Spanish woman, careful about her hair, which she wore high upon her head, careful about her shoes, and by degrees her walk became again the walk she had practised in her youth, when with her mother she had sauntered in the evening through the plaza of her native town, with a light swinging of her hips.

"Her Indian name of Lincomilla gave place once more to Nievés, and in a week or two some of the sunburn vanished from her cheeks.

"All the time of her transformation my friend watched the process as a man may watch the hour-hand on a clock, knowing it moves, but yet unable to discern the movement with his eyes.

"Just as it seems a miracle when on a fine spring morning one wakes and sees a tree which overnight was bare, now

crowned with green, so did it seem a miracle to him that the half-naked Indian whom he had captured, swinging her whip about her head and shouting to her horses, had turned into the Señorita Nievés, whilst he had barely seen the change. Something intangible seemed to have grown up between them, invisible, but quite impossible to pass, and now and then he caught himself regretting vaguely that he had let his captive slip out of his hands. Little by little their positions were reversed, and he who had been waited on by Lincomilla found himself treating the Señorita Nievés with all the . . . how you say . . . *'égards'* that a man uses to a lady in ordinary life.

"When his hand accidentally touched hers he shivered, and then cursed himself for a fool for not having taken advantage of the right of conquest the first day that he led the Indian girl into his home. All would have then seemed natural, and he would have only had another girl to serve his *mate*, a link in the long line of women who had succeeded one another since he first drove his cattle into the south camps and built his rancho on the creek. Then came a time when something seemed to blot out all the world, and nothing mattered but the Señorita Nievés, whom he desired so fiercely that his heart stood still when she brushed past him in her household duties; yet he refrained from speaking, kept back by pride, for he knew that, after all, she was in his power in that lone rancho on the plains. Sleeping and waking she was always there. If he rode out upon the *boleada** she seemed to go with him; on his return there she was standing, waiting for him with her enigmatic smile when he came home at night.

"She on her side was quite aware of all he suffered, suffering herself just as acutely, but being able better to conceal her feelings he never noticed it, or saw the shadowy look that long-suppressed desire brings in a woman's eyes. Their neighbours, ordinary men and women, had no idea

*A hunt with the bolas.

things were on such an exalted footing, and openly congratulated him on his good luck in having caught an Indian who had turned to a white girl. When he had heard these rough congratulations on his luck, he used to answer shortly, and catching his horse by the head, would gallop out upon the plain and come home tired, but with the same pain gnawing at his heart. How long they might have gone on in that way is hard to say, had not the woman—for it is generally they who take the first step in such things—suddenly put an end to it. Seeing him sitting by the fire one evening, and having watched him follow her with his eyes as she came in and out, she walked up to him and laid her hand upon his shoulder, and as he started and a thrill ran through his veins, bent down her face and pressing her dry lips to his, said: 'Take me,' and slid into his arms.

"That was their courtship. From that time, all up and down the Sauce Chico, the settlers, who looked on love as a thing men wrote about in books, or as the accomplishment of a necessary function without which no society could possibly endure, took a proprietary interest in the lovers, whom they called 'Los de Teruel,' after the lovers in the old Spanish play, who loved so constantly.

"Most certainly they loved as if they had invented love and meant to keep it to themselves. Foolish, of course they were, and primitive, he liking to rush off into Bahía Blanca to buy up all the jewellery that he could find to give her, and she, forgetting all the horrors of her life amongst the Indians, gave herself up to happiness as unrestrained as that of our first mother, when the whole world contained no other man but the one she adored.

"As in a day out on the southern plains, when all is still and the wild horses play, and from the lakes long lines of pink flamingoes rise into the air and seem translucent in the sun, when the whole sky becomes intensest purple, throwing a shadow on the grass that looks as if the very essence of the clouds was falling like a dew, the Indians say that a

Pampero must be brewing, and will soon burst with devastating force upon the happy world, so did their love presage misfortune by its intensity."

"A strong north wind is sure to bring a pampero,"* interpolated one of the listeners round the fire.

"Yes, that is so, and the pampero came accordingly," rejoined the story-teller.

"Months passed and still the neighbours talked of them with amazement, being used to see the force of passion burn itself out, just as a fire burns out in straw, and never having heard of any other kind of love except the sort they and their animals enjoyed.

"Then by degrees Nievés became a little melancholy, and used to sit for hours looking out on the pampa, and then come in and hide her head beneath her black Manila shawl, that shawl my friend had galloped to Bahía Blanca to procure, and had returned within two days, doing the forty leagues at a round gallop all the way.

"Little by little he became alarmed, and feared, having been a man whose own affections in the past had often strayed, that she was tired of him. To all his questions she invariably replied that she had been supremely happy, and for the first time had known love, which she had always thought was but a myth invented by the poets to pass the time away. Then she would cry and say that he was idiotic to doubt her for a moment, then catching him to her, crush him against her heart. For days together she was cheerful, but he, after the fashion of a man who thinks he has detected a slight lameness in his horse, but is not certain where, was always on the watch to try and find out what it was that ailed her, till gradually a sort of armed neutrality took the place of their love. Neither would speak, although both suffered almost as much as they had loved, until one evening as they stood looking out upon the Pampa yearning for one another, but kept apart by something that they felt, rather

*_Pampero_—a stormy south wind.

than knew was there, the woman with a cry threw herself into her lover's arms. Then with an effort she withdrew herself, and choking down her tears, said: 'I have been happy, dearest, happier by far than you can understand, happier than I think it is ever possible to be for any man. Think of my life, my father and my mother killed before my eyes, myself thrown to an Indian whom my soul loathed, then made by force the mother of his children—his and mine. Think what my life has been there in the *tolderías* (colony of Indian tents), exposed to the jealousy of all the Indian women, always in danger till my sons were born, and even then obliged to live for years amongst those savages and become as themselves.

" 'Then you came, and it seemed to me as if God had tired of persecuting me; but now I find that He or nature has something worse in store. I am happy here, but then there is no happiness on earth, I think. My children—his and mine—never cease calling me. I must return to them—and see, my horses all are fat, the foal can travel, and . . . you must think it has been all a dream, and let me go back to my master—husband—bear him more children, and at last be left to die when I am old, beside some river, like other Indian wives.' She dried her eyes, and gently touching him upon the shoulder, looked at him sadly, saying: 'Now you know, dearest, why it is I have been so sad and made you suffer, though you have loaded me with love. Now that you know I love you more a hundred times than the first day when, as you used to say, I took you for my own, you can let me go back to my duties and my misery, and perhaps understand.'

"Her lover saw her mind was fixed, and with an effort stammered: 'Bueno, you were my prisoner, but ever since I took you captive I have been your slave. . . . When will you go?'

"Let it be to-morrow, *sangre mía* (my blood), and at daybreak, for you must take me to the place where you first

saw me; it has become to me as it were a birthplace, seeing that there I first began to live.' Once more he answered, '*Bueno*,' like a man in a dream, and led her sadly back into their house.

"Just as the first red streaks of the false dawn had tinged the sky they saddled up without a word.

"Weary and miserable, with great black circles round their eyes, they stood a moment, holding their horses by their *cabrestos* (lead ropes), till the rising sun just fell upon the doorway of the poor rancho where they had been so happy in their love.

"Without a word they mounted, the captive once more turned to Lincomilla, dressed in her Indian clothes, swinging herself as lightly to the saddle as a man. Then gathering the horses all together, with the foal, now strong and fat, running behind its mother, they struck into the plains.

"Three or four hours of steady galloping brought them close to the place where Lincomilla had been taken captive by him who now rode silently beside her, with his eyes fixed on the horizon, like a man in a dream.

" 'It should be here,' she said, 'close to that tuft of *sarandis* . . . yes, there it is, for I remember it was there you took my horse by the bridle, as if you thought that I was sure to run away, back to the Indians.'

"Dismounting, they talked long and sadly, till Lincomilla tore herself from her lover's arms and once more swung herself upon her horse. The piebald Pingo with the split ears neighed shrilly to the other horses feeding a little distance off upon the plain, then, just as she raised her hand to touch his mouth, the man she was about to leave for ever stooped down and kissed her foot, which rested naked on the stirrup, after the Indian style. 'May the God of the Araucans, to whom you go, bless and encompass you,' he cried; 'my God has failed me,' and as he spoke she touched her horse lightly with the long Indian reins. The piebald plunged and wheeled round, and then struck into a measured gallop,

as his rider, gathering her horses up before her, set her face westward, without once looking back.

"I . . . that is my friend, stood gazing at her, watching the driven horses first sink below the horizon into the waves of grass, the foal last disappearing as it brought up the rear, and then the horse that Lincomilla rode, inch by inch fade from sight, just as a ship slips down the round edge of the world. Her feet went first, then the *caronas* of her saddle, and by degrees her body, wrapped in the brown *chamál*.

"Lastly, the glory of her floating hair hung for a moment in his sight upon the sky, then vanished, just as a piece of seaweed is sucked into the tide by a receding wave.

"That's all," the story-teller said, and once again began to paint his horses' brands in the wood ashes with his mutton-bone, as he sat gazing at the fire.

Silence fell on the camp, and in the still, clear night the sound of the staked-out horses cropping the grass was almost a relief. None spoke, for nearly all had lost some kind of captive, in some way or other, till Claraz, rising, walked round and laid his hand upon the story-teller's shoulder. "I fear," he said, "the telling of the tale has not done anything to make the weight upon the heart any the lighter.

"All down the coast, as I remember, from Mazatlán to Acapulco, pearl-fishers used to say, unless a man made up his mind to stay below the water till his ears burst, that he would never be a first-rate pearl-diver.

"Some men could never summon up the courage, and remained indifferent pearl-divers, suffering great pain, and able to remain only a short time down in the depths, as their ears never burst. It seems to me that you are one of those . . . but, I know I am a fool, I like you better as you are."

He ceased, and the grey light of dawn fell on the sleepless camp on the north fork of the Mostazas (or perhaps the Napostá); it fell upon the smouldering fire, with Lincomilla's lover still drawing horses' marks in the damp ashes, and on the group of men wrapped in their ponchos shivering and

restless with the first breath of day.

Out on the plain, some of the horses were lying down beside their bell-mares. Others stood hanging their heads low between their feet, with their coats ruffled by the dew.

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A SILHOUETTE

THE great brown plains of Entre Rios wore an unfamiliar air. Herds of tame mares had run half wild. They snorted and made off, a thousand yards away, their tangled manes and tails all knotted up with burs, streaming out in the wind. The cattle had become as fierce as buffaloes, and anyone who lost his horse had to make long detours, for to approach them was as dangerous as to come near a tiger or a lion. Only about the flat-roofed, whitewashed houses, set in their frames of peach groves, did a few animals remain domestic, and even those, at the approach of man, often made off and joined their fellows on the plains.

Sheep were close-herded, not by mere boys who climbed up to their saddles by placing a small, brown, prehensile toe upon their horse's knees, but by armed men.

The deer and ostriches ran if they saw a man a mile away, and disappeared down the brown grassy swells, just as a flying-fish shoots down the watery hills raised by the North-East Trades.

Men, *campeando* (rounding up) horses that had strayed, if they were forced to ascend a little hill, got off, and creeping on all fours, surveyed the country cautiously, and then, having made sure that all was quiet on the plain beyond, remained as short a time as possible standing against the sky. If at the crossing of a river, where the thick belts of hardwood trees obscured the view, two travellers came unexpectedly upon each other face to face, their hands at once sought pistol or *facón* (knife), and as they crossed at a sufficient distance to escape a sudden shot or lasso cast, cautiously passed the time of day, and not infrequently, seized with a panic, spurred their horses, and galloped for a mile or so before they drew their reins.

The sight, on the horizon, of a band of men made the few dwellers in the scattered mud-built *ranchos* flee to the woods, driving their horses, carrying their wives and children, at full speed, leaving their scanty household goods to the protection of their dogs.

For months the revolution had been going on, the rival bands roaming about and stealing horses, slaughtering the cattle, and now and then, if they could catch a man or two alone, cutting their throats just as they cut a sheep's, driving the knife in at the point with the edge outwards, and bending back the head.

The death of General Justo de Urquiza had broken up the province into two hostile camps, and Reds and Whites maddened and raved about the land, avoiding one another for the most part, but fighting furiously when circumstances brought them to striking distance and there was no escape. Prisoners had little chance, and those who fell alive into the enemies' hands were foolish not to have kept a cartridge, as now and then they were sewn up in hides fresh stripped from off an ox, then left to die, exposed to sun and rain, and eaten by the flies. Others were killed in various ingenious ways, and the best anyone could hope for was to be shot, or have his throat cut out of hand. No hypocritical pretence of treating fallen enemies as friends had ever crossed the minds of anybody, and war was carried on just as it might have been between wild beasts, quite naturally, and with the full amount of cruelty with which our nature has endowed us, free and unrestrained. Still, on the whole, things were no worse than they are in European wars, except that every man who fought, knew that he did so with a halter round his neck.

As all the rank and file on either side were pressed occasionally fathers and sons or brothers found themselves opposed to one another, and, strange to say, the claims of party as a general rule proved stronger than the call of blood, and not infrequently it chanced that friends were called upon

to kill each other, and did so, as it appeared, without a qualm of conscience, so strong is discipline, and so amenable mankind to every influence, whether of custom or of use.

It chanced upon a day, near Villaguay, two brothers owned a small *estancia*, known as "Las Arias," close to a strip of monte (forest) near a river in which *carpinchos* (water-hogs) swam and tortoises abounded, and where green parakeets flew shrieking through the maize field, and built their hanging nests in the old *espinillo* trees, which here and there stood up amongst the corn. The thick green grass fed mares and cattle, and kept them fat and sleek, when on the outside "camps" animals starved from the lack of pasture, and trailed themselves laboriously for miles to drink at water-holes, upon the face of which carcases bloated in the sun, floated like bladders, and in whose mud, cows and thin mares got stuck like flies in treacle, and slowly starved, surrounded by a troop of vultures, who sat and waited patiently, just as the faithful followers of some great politician sit faithfully expecting the glad moment when his death shall free them and unchain their tongues, which have got stiff for want of exercise during their leader's life.

The brothers lived the ordinary life of men in those days, on the plains. From their youth upwards they had scanned the Pampa as sailors scan the sea, reading it like a book, and knowing almost instinctively, all the lore men learn when born to look at nature as an enemy, between whom and themselves a temporary truce exists, but which at any moment may be broken in the twinkling of an eye. Men were, of course, all hostile to them, and their philosophy short, pithy, and extracted from the simples of their lives, bade them beware, and as they said themselves, "Never facilitate," that is, never to sit down on the left of anyone, for by so doing he had you at a disadvantage when high words ensued, and you essayed to draw your knife. So, at the passing of a river, if you could well avoid it, you did not ride into the water first, especially if you were wearing silver spurs or reins, or any of

the massive trappings with which on feast days men adorned their horses, for it might chance that you received a knife-thrust in the back from a too much admiring friend, or perhaps merely because the sudden lust to kill, so frequent amongst dwellers on the plains, rose in the heart of the man following you, just as in islands far out at sea a roller suddenly sets in during a calm, and sweeps away boats anchored off the shore.

To these two brothers, with their quiet, but occasionally bloody, pastoral life, whose only care was to acquire some silver horse gear, to keep their cattle fat, and their *tropilla* (troop of horses) sleek and tame, and in whose minds a vague but stimulating idea that they were free, with no one daring to constrain them in their lives, the fear of revolution hung like a black cloud, which somehow it had always seemed impossible should burst. Not that they cared about the matter in the abstract, knowing that when a Government went out a revolution followed, just as inevitably as blood pours out after you plunge a knife into a sheep. It seemed to them quite natural, for judging by themselves, they knew no one gave up a woman or a horse without a fight, and what so natural as that a man who had enjoyed the sweets of being *government* should struggle to retain his place at the knife's point, and to the utmost of his might?

So, as they lived their lives, religiously catching a horse at night, to stake out ready to stand all day and blink and hang his head, if not required for work, and sitting hours in the kitchen drinking their *mate*, and illustrating all their points by diagrams drawn with the point of a *facón* (knife) on the mud floor, upon them came one morning, as a *Pampero* (a storm from the south) comes up on a summer's day, the news that General Fulano had "pronounced." Soon came the usual rumours in a revolution, of men impressed to serve, of horses taken, of cattle killed, and now and then mysterious parties of armed men passed, almost, as it were, hull down on the horizon of the Pampean ocean, a gleam of sun falling

occasionally on a lance-head or rifle barrel, before they sank beneath the grassy waves which roll towards the south.

Much did the brothers and their mother deliberate on what was best to do to avoid the ruin which they foresaw would fall upon them. The mother, an old *china* woman, wrinkled and brown, was urgent that her two sons should get together all their best horses and "emigrate," that is, cross either into Santa Fé or Uruguay, and as she said, "Play armadillo." But they, used to the district, and knowing the recesses of the "montes" by the rivers as well as if they had been tigers or *carpinchos* (water-hogs), thought it was best to stay at home and wait.

They held their council, after the gaucho fashion, in the kitchen, sitting upon hard blocks of *ñandubay* (a hard wood) or horses' heads, passing the *mate* round, and now and then holding it in their hands and listening, as a horse snorted, or a stallion, gathering up his mares, galloped past in the dark. Occasionally the tame *chajá** gave its shrill cry, causing the mother to look up and say that either it would rain, because, as all men knew, when the *chajá* cried, that it had to rain, even against God's will, or that there was a thief afoot after the horses staked out near the house.

They sat and talked, watching the negro *capataz* (foreman) Gregorio come in and out, the firelight falling on his silver-handled knife as he walked to and fro as noiselessly as if he were a ghost, in his white *potro* (raw-hide) boots. His *santas tardes* broke the silence, and, sitting down, he took the *mate* from the attendant negro girl who stood by, with a small kettle ready on the fire to fill the gourd, and suck at the *bombilla* to see it was not choked before she handed it about. The others looked at him in silence till he had drunk his *mate*, for it would be bad manners to speak first to anyone who comes into a room. Unsheathing his long knife, after apology for drawing it before a lady, he laid it by his side, and, taking out a lump of black tobacco, dexterously cut

**Chajá*—horned screamer, sometimes called the "eagle of the Pampas."

enough, and tearing from a sheet of paper, about as large as a good sheet of foolscap, a piece of the right size, and holding it between his toes which stuck out from his *potro* boots, made toeless so as to catch the stirrup, he rubbed the cut tobacco fine and made a cigarette. Lighting it with a cinder held upon his knife, he blew a thin blue cloud from his thick nostrils, and began slowly.

"Sí, sí, señor, they say that parties of the Reds have been about the Gualeguáy, not twenty leagues away. Lopez Jordán is moving southward with a horde of Correntinos, infidels who all speak Guarani. From Villaguay down to Calá, and right through Montiel, scarcely a horse is left, and all the beasts they kill, they roast with the hide on, so that there is a double loss, both of the meat and hide."

A "Sí, señor," half whispered, was his answer, and through the door, glistening amongst the leaves of the peach *monte*, the giant fireflies known as *tulipanes*, flitted like humming birds that had been rubbed with phosphorus, and from the plain stretching out white in the bright moonlight, the acrid scent of sheep floated upon the air, their bleating in the fold seeming like distant bells. Occasionally dogs barked, and now and then the shrill *chajá* repeated his wild note, and flapped his horny wings with a strange hollow sound.

Gregorio, suddenly starting to his feet, went out, and after listening anxiously, lay down, and, with his ear close to the ground, remained a little motionless, then getting up said, "Just at the pass, you know, where the tall *seibo* (a tree) grows, I hear the noise of a large body of armed men."

"Why armed?" one of the *mate* drinkers said.

"Firstly, because no body so considerable as this is likely to be out at night except in arms, and secondly, because I hear steel scabbards ring, which probably are those worn by the officers, for the men wear them sticking through their girths."

In the twinkling of an eye the quiet kitchen was in confusion, and the two brothers hurriedly kissed their mother

and, rushing out to where their horses fed attached to stake ropes, mounted in haste, barebacked, and quickly gathering up the horses feeding round their mare, whom they released as if by magic, one brother slipping off his horse as lightly as a leaf falls from a tree, to take the bell from off her neck, like shadows disappeared into the night; all the loose horses galloping in front.

A dropping shot or two and a wild galloping of unseen horses showed that the brothers had been seen by the advanced guard of the marauding party, but soon the unfamiliar noises died away, and left the plain silent and peaceful and as if nothing more was passing than the quiet setting of the stars.

Inside the kitchen the night wore on, with now and then a prayer, and with the *mate* going round from hand to hand, and now and then the *negro capataz* (dark skinned foreman) went out, lay down and listened, and coming back, sat gravely down, saying that he heard nothing but the Three Marias were getting low on the horizon, and it was time for sleep, seeing that even they, the blessed three, set in the heavens by God Himself to keep the holy Trinity before men's eyes, would soon retire to rest.

The mother of the boys, escorted by her negro maid-servant, carrying a kettle in her hand so that her mistress might take a *mate* before she went to bed, went out, and passed into the grey light of the coming dawn; passing beneath the stunted China trees, skirting the well round which a pack of yellow dogs as lean as wolves were sleeping, who blinked at them and then dozed off again.

The women stopped before the entrance to the low white house, listened intently for a moment just as wild horses listen, even before they are alarmed, and then quietly closed the door, almost mechanically, as if they had been walking in their sleep.

The *capataz*, left all alone, smoked silently for a few minutes, then rising, he extinguished the *candil* which burned in an inverted mare's bell, stuck between the mouldings of a

broken cattle brand driven into the earthen floor. Then, taking off his *chiripà* (a cloth worn instead of trousers) he placed his knife close to his hand, just underneath his saddle, and stretching himself out, his feet towards the fire, wrapped himself in his poncho, and fell asleep. Towards daylight he was roused by the dogs barking, and, looking out in the first light of the false dawn, saw a man riding a tired horse, hatless and wet, advancing to the house. Taking his long silver-handled *facón* in his left hand, concealed beneath the poncho which had covered him asleep, he cautiously advanced to the *palenque* (hitching-post), and waited till the man came up. At twenty yards away he knew him, and called out, "Ah! *patroncito*, what has happened? Where are your brother and the horses?" But a glance at the exhausted rider showed him that something untoward had occurred. Sliding off, all in one motion, so quickly that his right foot almost seemed to touch the ground before the left, and yet so quietly that he scarce moved the dew upon the grass, the young man slipped the bridle from his horse, which stood a moment hanging its head, with flanks tucked up and the wet dew clinging upon its quarters; and then, shaking like a retriever dog, lay down and rolled, then shook itself again, and quietly began to feed.

Lifting the dried mare's hide, that, hanging from two pegs, served as a door, they passed into the kitchen, and when the *capataz* had blown the ashes of the banked-up fire into a glow, and thrown a bundle of dried thistle stalks upon it, he heated water, and, handing the young man a *mate*, said, "Drink, *patroncito*, and tell me what it is. Where is your brother? Is he alive, or riding in the plains of Trapalanda,* as the Indians say?"

Sucking the hot and bitter liquid to the dregs, Panchito then began: "No, no Gregorio, my brother is not dead, and luckily only rides with a party of the Colorados who came upon us with our horses swimming the river, and waited for us to come out, just as a man sent forward in an ostrich hunt

*Trapalanda—the horse heaven of the gauchos.

waits for the driven birds. My brother turned his horse to cross again, but as he did so, a party lined the bank we just had left, and took him prisoner at once. I let my hat drop in the stream to draw their fire, and threw myself beside my horse, and when we touched the shore, darted at once full speed into the woods. They fired, but missed me, and the trees prevented them from throwing 'bolas' at my horse. So here I am safe, tired and wet, with all our horses gone, and my poor brother Cruz obliged to serve amongst the *Colorados* as long as General Lopez keeps the field."

As they sat talking, little by little the sun rose through the mist, which hung on every blade of grass and fell in drops off the low eaves of the estancia buildings, and clung about the coats of animals. *Vizcachas* peeped out timidly from their holes, and *tucotucos* sounded their last note from underneath the ground, before retiring for the day. Sheep bleated in the fold, and cattle, sleeping on the highest ground that they could find, stretched out their heads, but did not rise to eat, knowing the wet, white dew upon the grass would be injurious to them, whilst from the monte by the riverside the noise of myriads of birds just waking, filled the air with sound.

"Let us go out and meet the sun as do the accursed Indians in the far south of Buenos Aires, where I once was a soldier," Gregorio said.

Rising, they went out to the door, and as they stood and scanned the plain, a noise of galloping fell on their ears.

"What have we done," Panchito said, "to irritate the Lord that he allows another band of these accursed Reds to visit us? Providence surely cannot remember that our father was a White?"

Suddenly over a low hill a man appeared racing upon a barebacked horse, his knife between his teeth. After him swept a band of ragged soldiers, some getting out their *bolas* for a throw. Both onlookers recognised at once the rider and his horse.

"My brother Cruz. "Yes, on his blue roan horse," the capataz replied. Even as they spoke, the foremost soldier, with a long cast of the *bolas*, caught the blue roan round the hind legs, and with a plunge or two he fell, and the pursuers gathered round their prey. Leaping upon their horses, the agonised onlookers scoured to the place, and just arrived to hear a sergeant say, "We must make an example; the young man has been once within our ranks; besides, his father was a cursed White . . . you *negro* there, dismount and cut his throat."

Pale and disordered with his fall, Cruz stood, disarmed and helpless, looking mechanically at the rising sun, knowing, he saw it, for the last time upon earth. Its light fell on his face, flushing his cheeks and bathing all the group of gauchos and their horses in its life-giving rays. Facing about, the sergeant cried, "Keep those men back till I have finished with this dog," and then signing the *negro* forward, who advanced, drawing his knife and scenting blood, just as a wolf lays bare its fangs before he pounces on a lamb, with a quick movement threw the prisoner on his face, wrenched back his head, and plunged his dagger in his throat. With a convulsive movement and a whistling sound, as when the air is suddenly let out of a pricked bladder, the blood gushed out, staining the grass, and feet of the impassive gauchos who stood round. The victim's eyes glazed slowly, then turned back horribly, exposing all the white, and a convulsive grin deformed his features, whilst the negro pressed his body with his foot, just as a butcher presses the body of a sheep, to cause the blood to flow. A few convulsive movements of the legs showed life was passing, and then the body lay extended on the grass, helpless and limp, and looking like a bundle of old clothes.

The sergeant spoke the funeral oration, as the *negro* wiped his knife, saying, "The young man might have made a soldier, for he was brave, and was no miser of his throat."

Then they all mounted, lightly as a flock of birds, and

struck across the plain, their horses leaving a dark trail as they brushed through the dew-bespangled grass.

Panchito, slipping off, cast himself on his brother's body with a groan, mechanically throwing the reins over his horse's head, upon the ground to stop him moving off. The horse snorted a little at the fresh-spilt blood, and then stood like a statue, outlined and motionless against the sky, in the full glare of the new-risen sun.

PAMPA STORE

IT may have been the *Flor de Mayo*,* *Rosa del Sur*,* or *Tres de Junio*,* or again but have been known as the *Pulpería* upon the *Huesos*,* or the *Esquina* on the *Napostá*.* But let its name have been what chance or the imagination of some Neapolitan or Basque had given it, I see it, and seeing it, dismounting, fastening my *redomón*† to the *palenque*,‡ enter, loosen my *facón*,§ feel if my pistol is in its place, and calling out "Carlón." receive my measure of strong, heady red Spanish wine in a tin cup. Passing it round to the company, who touch it with their lips to show their breeding, I seem to feel the ceaseless little wind which always blows upon the southern plains, stirring the dust upon the pile of fleeces in the court, and whistling through the wooden *reja* ‖ where the *pulpero*¶ stands behind his counter with his pile of bottles close beside him, ready for what may chance. For outward visible signs, a low, squat, mud-built house, surrounded by a shallow ditch on which grew stunted cactuses, and with *paja brava*** sticking out of the adobe of the overhanging eaves. Brown, sun-baked, dusty-looking, it stands up, an island in the sea of waving hard-stemmed grasses which the improving settler passes all his life in a vain fight to improve away; and make his own particular estancia an Anglo-Saxon Eden of trim sheep cropped turf, set here and there with "agricultural implements," broken and thrown aside, and though imported at great trouble and expense, destined to be replaced by pon-

*Typical names of Pampa stores.

†*Redomón*—a half tame horse.

‡*Palenque*—hitching-post.

§*Facón*—a long knife worn in the belt.

‖*Reja*—grill.

¶*Pulpero*—store-keeper.

***Paja brava*—a coarse grass.

derous native ploughs hewn from the solid ñandubày, and which, of course, inevitably prove the superiority of the so-called unfit. For inward graces, the *reja* before which runs a wooden counter at which the flower of the *Gauchaje** of the district lounge, or sit with their toes sticking through their potro boots,† swinging their legs and keeping time to the *cielito*‡ of the *payador*§ upon his cracked guitar, the strings eked out with fine-cut thongs of mare's hide, by jingling their spurs.

Behind the wooden grating, sign in the Pampa of the eternal hatred betwixt those who buy and those who sell, some shelves of yellow pine, on which are piled ponchos from Leeds, ready-made *calzoncillos*,‖ *alpargatas*,¶ figs, sardines, raisins, bread—for bread upon the Pampa used to be eaten only at Pulperías—saddle-cloths, and in a corner the *botillería*,** where vermouth, absinthe, square-faced gin, Carlon, and Vino Seco stand in a row, with the barrel of Brazilian *caña*,†† on the top of which the *pulpero* ostentatiously parades his pistol and his knife. Outside, the tracks led through the *biscacheras*,‡‡ all converging after the fashion of the rails at a junction; at the *palenque* before the door stood horses tied by strong raw-hide *cabrestos*,§§ hanging their heads in the fierce sun, shifting from leg to leg, whilst their companions, hobbled, plunged about, rearing themselves on their hind-legs to jump like kangaroos.

Now and then Gauchos rode up occasionally, their iron spurs hanging off their naked feet, held by a raw-hide thong;

**Gauchaje*—cow-boys.

†Potro boots—boots made from the arw-hide of horses' lega.

‡*Cielito*—an Argentine dance.

§*Payador*—troubadour.

‖*Calzoncillos*—under-pants.

¶*Alpargatas*—rope-soled slippers.

***Botillería*—bar.

††*Caña*—rum.

‡‡*Biscacheras*—places where *biscachas* have burrowed. (*Biscachas* are animals resembling the prairie-dogs of North America.)

§§*Cabrestos*—lead-ropes.

some dressed in black *bombachas** and vicuña ponchos, their horses weighted down with silver, and prancing sideways as their riders sat immovable, but swaying from the waist upwards like willows in a wind. Others, again, on lean young colts, riding upon a saddle covered with sheepskin, gripping the small hide stirrup with their toes and forcing them up to the posts with shouts of "Ah baguall" "Ah Tehuelchel" "Ahijunal"† and with resounding blows of their short, flat-lashed whips, which they held by a thong between their fingers or slipped upon their wrists, then grasping their frightened horses by the ears, got off as gingerly as a cat jumps from a wall. From the rush-thatched, mud-walled *rancheria*‡ at the back the women, who always haunt the outskirts of a *pulperia* in the districts known as *tierra adentro* (the inside country), Indians and semi-whites, mulatresses, and now and then a stray Basque or Italian girl turned out, to share the quantity they considered love with all mankind.

But gin and politics, with horses' marks, accounts of fights, and recollections of the last revolution, kept men for the present occupied with serious things, so that the women were constrained to sit and smoke, drink *mate*, plait each other's hair (searching it diligently the while), and wait until Carlon with *Vino Seco*, square-faced rum, *cachaza*,§ and the medicated log-wood broth, which on the Pampa passes for *Vino francés*, had made men sensible to their softer charms. That which in Europe we call love, and think by inventing it that we have cheated God, who clearly planted nothing but an instinct of self-continuation in mankind, as in the other animals, seems either to be in embryo, waiting for economic advancement to develop it; or is perhaps not even dormant in countries such as those in whose vast plains the pulpería stands for club, exchange, for meeting-place, and represents

*Bombachas—wide, baggy trousers.

†Exclamations meaning, more or less, Ah broncol Ah Indian! Son of a gun!

‡Rancheria—a group of huts.

§Cachaza—Brazilian rum.

all that in other lands men think they find in Paris or in London, and choose to dignify under the style of intellectual life. Be it far from me to think that we have bettered the Creator's scheme; or by the substitution of our polyandry for polygamy, bettered the position of women, or in fact done anything but changed and made more complex that which at first was clear to understand.

But, be that as it may and without dogmatism, our love, our vices, our rendering wicked things natural in themselves, our secrecy, our pruriency, adultery, and all the myriad ramifications of things sexual, without which no novelist could earn his bread, fall into nothing, except there is a press-directed public opinion, laws, bye-laws, leaded type and headlines, so to speak, to keep them up. True, nothing of all this entered our heads as we sat drinking, listening to a contest of minstrelsy *por contrapunto** betwixt a Gaucho *payador*† and a *matrero negro*‡ of great fame, who each in turn taking the cracked *changango*§ in their lasso-hardened hands, plucked at its strings in such a style as to well illustrate the saying that to play on the guitar is not a thing of science, but requires but perseverance, hard finger-tips, and an unusual development of strength in the right wrist. Negro and *payador* each sang alternately; firstly old Spanish love songs handed down from before the independence, quavering and high; in which *Frasquita* rhymed to *chiquita*, and one *Cupido*, whom I never saw in Pampa, *loma*,‖ *rincón*,‖ *bolsón*,‖ or *medano*,‖ in the *Chañares*,‖ amongst the woods of *ñandubay*,‖ the *pajonales*,‖ *sierras*,‖ *cuchillas*,‖ or in all the land, figured and did nothing very special; flourished, and then departed in a high falsetto shake, a rough sweep of the hard brown fingers over the jarring strings forming his fitting epitaph.

The story of "El Fausto," and how the Gaucho, Aniceto,

*Por *contrapunto*—through counterpoint.

†*Payador*—troubadour.

‡*Matrero negro*—a roaming gaucho who is quick with the knife.

§*Changango*—gaucho slang for *guitar*.

‖Shrubs, grasses and features of the country.

went to Buenos Aires, saw the opera of *Faust*, lost his puñal in the crush to take his seat, sat through the fearsome play, saw face to face the enemy of man, described* as being dressed in long stockings to the stifle-joint, eyebrows like arches for tilting at the wing, and eyes like water-holes in a dry river bed, succeeded, and the negro took up the challenge and rejoined. He told how, after leaving town, that Aniceto mounted on his *Overo rósao*† (piebald), fell in with his *compadre* (casual friend), told all his wondrous tale, and how they finished off their bottle and left it floating in the river like a buoy.

The *payador*, not to be left behind, and after having tuned his guitar and put the *cejilla*‡ on the strings, launched into the strange life of Martin Fierro, type of the Gauchos on the frontier, related his multifarious fights, his escapades, and love affairs, and how at last he, his friend, Don Cruz, saw on an evening the last houses as, with a stolen tropilla of good horses, they passed the frontier to seek the Indians' tents. The death of Cruz, the combat of Martin with the Indian chief—he with his knife, the Indian with the *bolas*—and how Martin slew him and rescued the captive woman, who prayed to heaven to aid the Christian, with the body of her dead child, its hands secured in a string made out of one of its own entrails, lying before her as she watched the varying fortunes of the fight, he duly told. La Vuelta de Martín and the strange maxims of Tío Viscacha, that Pampa cynic whose maxim was never to ride up to a house where dogs were thin, and who set forth that arms are necessary, but no man can

*"Medias hasta la berija
Con cada ojo como un charco,
Y cada ceja era un arco
Para correr la sortija."

†"En un overo rosao, flete lindo y parejito,
Caia al bajo al trotecito, y lindamente sentao.
Un paisano del Bragao, de apelativo Laguna,
Mozo ginetazo ahijuna, como creo que no hay otro
Capaz de llevar un potro a sofrenarlo en la luna."

‡A small contrivance screwed on a guitar to alter the pitch.

tell when, were duly recorded by the combatants, listened to and received as new and authentic by the audience, till at last the singing and the frequent glasses of Carlon made Payador and Negro feel that the time had come to leave off *contrapunto* and decide which was most talented in music, with their *facóns* (knives). A personal allusion to the colour of the Negro's skin, a retort calling in question the nice conduct of the sister of the Payador, and then two savages foaming at the mouth, their ponchos wrapped round their arms, their bodies bent so as to protect their vitals, and their knives quivering like snakes, stood in the middle of the room. The company withdrew themselves into the smallest space, stood on the tops of casks, and at the door the faces of the women looked in delight, whilst the *pulpero*, with a pistol and a bottle in his hands, closed down his grating and was ready for whatever might befall. "Negro," "Ahijuna," "miente," "carajo," and the knives flash and send out sparks as the returns de tic au tac jar the fighters' arms up to the shoulder-joints. In a moment all is over, and from the *payador's* right arm the blood drops in a stream on the mud floor, and all the company step out and say the negro is a *valiente, muy guapetón*,* and the two adversaries swear friendship over a tin mug of gin. But all the time during the fight, and whilst outside the younger men had ridden races barebacked, making false starts to tire each other's horses out, practising all the tricks they knew, as kicking their adversary's horse in the chest, riding beside their opponent and trying to lift him from his seat by placing their foot underneath his and pushing upwards, an aged Gaucho had gradually become the centre figure of the scene.

Seated alone he muttered to himself, occasionally broke into a falsetto song, and now and then half drawing out his knife, glared like a tiger-cat, and shouted "*Viva Rosas*,"† though he knew that chieftain had been dead for twenty years.

**Valiente, muy guapetón*—a brave, very tough fellow.

†Rosas was a very famous gaucho chieftain.

Tall-and with straggling iron-grey locks hanging down his back, a broad-brimmed plush hat kept in its place by a black ribbon with two tassels under his chin, a red silk Chinese handkerchief tied loosely round his neck and hanging with a point over each shoulder-blade, he stood dressed in his *chiripa** and poncho, like a mad prophet amongst the motley crew. Upon his feet were *potro* boots, that is the skin taken off the hind-leg of a horse, the hock-joint forming the heel and the hide softened by pounding with a mallet, the whole tied with a garter of a a strange pattern woven by the Indians, leaving the toes protruding to catch the stirrups, which as a *domador*† he used, made of a knot of hide. Bound round his waist he had a set of ostrich balls covered in lizard skin, and his broad belt made of *carpincho*‡ leather was kept in place by five Brazilian dollars, and through it stuck a long *facón* (knife) with silver handle shaped like a half-moon, and silver sheath fitted with a catch to grasp his sash. Whilst others talked of women or of horses, alluding to their physical perfections, tricks or predilections, their hair, hocks, eyes, brands or peculiarities, discussing them alternately with the appreciation of men whose tastes are simple but yet know all the chief points of interest in both subjects, he sat and drank. Tío Cabrera (said the others) is in the past, he thinks of times gone by; of the Italian girl whom he forced and left with her throat cut and her tongue protruding, at the pass of the Puán; of how he stole the Indian's horses, and of the days when Rosas ruled the land. *Pucha, compadre,*§ those were times, eh? Before the "nations," English, Italian and Neapolitan, with French and all the rest, came here to learn the taste of meat, and ride, the *maturrangos,* ‖ in their own countries having never seen a horse. But though they talked at, yet they refrained

Chiripa—a square sheet of cloth, worn instead of trousers.

†*Domador*—horse-breaker.

‡*Carpincho*—water-hog.

§*Pucha compadre*—an exclamation.

‖*Maturrango*—a person who rides badly.

from speaking to him, for he was old, and even the devil knows more because of years than because he is the devil, and they knew also that to kill a man was to Tío Cabrera as pleasant an exercise as for them to kill a sheep. But at last I, with the accumulated wisdom of my twenty years, holding a glass of *caña* in my hand, approached him, and inviting him to drink, said, not exactly knowing why, "Viva Urquiza," and then the storm broke out. His eyes flashed fire, and drawing his *facón* he shouted "*Muera! . . . Viva Rosas,*" and drove his knife into the mud walls, struck on the counter with the flat of the blade, foamed at the mouth, broke into snatches of obscene and long-forgotten songs, as "*Viva Rosas! Muera Urquiza dale guasca en la petiza,*" whilst the rest, not heeding that I had a pistol in my belt, tried to restrain him by all means in their power. But he was maddened, yelled, "Yes, I, Tío Cabrera, known also as el Cordero, tell you I know how to play the violin (a euphemism on the south pampa for cutting throats). In Rosas' time, Viva el General, I was his right-hand man, and have dispatched many a Unitario dog either to Trapalanda or to hell. Caña, blood, Viva Rosas, Muera!" then tottering and shaking, his knife slipped from his hands and he fell on a pile of sheepskins with white foam exuding from his lips. Even the Gauchos, who took a life as other men take a cigar, and from their earliest childhood are brought up to kill, were dominated by his brute fury, and shrank to their horses in dismay. The *pulpero* murmured *salvaje* (*savage*) from behind his bars, the women trembled and ran to their *toldería* (huts), holding each other by the hands, and the guitar-players sat dumb, fearing their instruments might come to harm. I, on the contrary, either impelled by the strange savagery inherent in men's blood or by some reason I cannot explain, caught the infection, and getting on my horse, a half-wild *redomón*, spurred him and set him plunging, and at each bound struck him with the flat edge of my *facón* then shouting "Viva Rosas," galloped out furiously upon the plain.

A MEETING

IT was, if I remember rightly, for it is more than thirty years ago, in the great stretch of forest between Caraguatá-Guazú and Caballero Punta, that the meeting which I think brought joy, at least for a short time to one of those concerned took place. For miles the track ran through the woods; the trail worn deep into the red and sandy soil looked like a ribbon, dropped underneath the dark, metallic-foliaged trees.

At times, a great fallen log, round which the parasitic vegetation had wrapped itself, turned the path off, just as a rock diverts the current of a stream. In places the road, opened long ago, most likely by the Jesuits, ran almost in the dark, under the intertwining ceibas and urandéys. Again, it came out on a clearing, in which a straw-thatched hut or two, with a scant patch of *mandioca*, an orange grove, and a thick bunch of plantains, marked a settlement. The fences were all broken, and peccaries had rooted up the crops. The oranges lay rotting underneath the trees, and as you passed along, the solitary trail and came out on the clearings, flocks of green parakeets took wing from where they had been feeding in the deserted fields, and troops of monkeys howled. The four years' war had laid the country waste, and villages were left deserted, or at the best inhabited by women and by girls. In all that long, mosquito-haunted ride, that I remember, just as if I had ridden it a week ago, through the old Jesuit missions, between the Paraná and Paraguay, it was the rarest thing to meet a man, and rarer still to meet a horse. Occasionally you might come upon a family living alone amongst the woods, upon the edge of some old clearing; but if you did, they had no animals about the house but fowls.

At intervals you might chance to cross some wandering Correntino, dressed in the poncho and the *bombachas* (baggy trousers) of the Gaucho, journeying towards Asunción; more rarely a Brazilian on his mule; but all the natives were on foot, most of the horses having been killed in the long war. The legend was that Lopez met his death on the last native Paraguayan horse, a little roan; but be that as it may, horses were rare to find, and the fierce nature of the Tropics had so reconquered all the cultivated land that there was little grass for them to eat. Fields that had once born mandioca were indistinguishable under a tangle of rank grass, dwarf palms and scrubby plants, whilst maize plantations had remained unsown, bearing but a few straggling plants, grown from the falling ears. Even the pathways through the woods had become impassable, through the thick growth of gnarled and knotty lianas, which, like a web of cordage, barred the way. Tigers abounded, and killed the few remaining horses, if they could catch them sleeping near the woods. Bats and mosquitoes, with enormous ticks, combined with several distempers, which the natives said had only come after the war, and when the country had begun to go back to the primeval forest, rendered a horse's life unbearable, and made him difficult to keep.

Those Paraguayans who had a horse cherished him as the apple of their eye, covering him up at night against the vampire bats, and bathing him at sunrise and at sunset to keep away ticks and mosquitoes and a thousand other crawling and flying plagues. Even with these precautions there yet remained the fear of snakes and poisonous weeds, so that a man who had a horse became a slave, and passed his time in caring for him and ministering to his welfare and his health. So as I jogged, that is, of course, walked, for the forest trails were far too deeply worn into the soil to jog with safety, I passed long strings of women, dressed in their low-cut sack-like garment, embroidered round the neck with black embroidery. Their hair, cut square across the forehead

and hanging down their backs, gave them a mediæval air. All were barefooted, and all smoked thick cigars, which they kept lighted at the torch their leader carried in her hand to scare the jaguars. Upon their heads they carried baskets full of oranges, of *mandioca*, and of maize. Sometimes they all saluted, sometimes they only smiled and showed their teeth, and sometimes one of them would say, amidst the laughter of the rest, "We all want husbands," and added something else in Guarani that made a laugh run rippling down the line.

Occasionally a crashing in the bushes near the trail told of the passage of a tapir, through the underwood, and once as I came to a little clearing a tiger lay stretched flat upon a log, watching the fish in some dark backwater, just as a cat lies on the garden wall to watch the birds. Butterflies floated lazily about, scarce moving their broad, velvet wings, reminding one somehow of owls, flitting across a grass ride in a wood, noiseless, but startling by their very quietness.

The snakes, the humming-birds, the alligators basking in the creeks, the whir of insects and the metallic croaking of the frogs, the air of being in the grip of an all-powerful vegetation, reduced a man, travelling alone through the green solitude, to nothingness. One felt as if in all that wealth of vegetation and strange birds and beasts, one's horse were the one living thing that was of the same nature as oneself.

Had Balaam only heard his ass's voice in such a place, it would have sounded comforting to him, and might have cheered him on his way. The heat which poured down from the sun, in the few places where the track was open overhead, met the heat rising from the red, sandy soil and focussed on one's face, drying the blood that the innumerable flies had drawn, into hard, sticky flakes. After interminable hours of heat, and intervals of dozing from which one woke but just in time to save one's balance and to remember, shuddering, what would occur, if by mischance one fell and let the horse escape, alone, and miles away from any human habitation, the trail led out upon a little clearing in the sea of woods. Smoke

curled from a fire under some orange trees, between whose branches hung a cotton hammock, with the fringe sweeping on the ground, as it swung to and fro, impelled by a brown foot.

To my astonishment my horse neighed shrilly, and was answered by a horse, which on first coming to the clearing I had overlooked. As I rode up, repeating as I rode, the formula, "Hail, blessed Virgin," being answered by the man who had been lying in the hammock, "Without sin conceived," I saw the horse was a red roan, fat and in good condition, and branded with the sign of Aries, set rather low upon the hip. The Paraguayan welcomed me, and bringing out two solid, wooden chairs with cowhide seats, tilted them up against the wall of his mud and straw-thatched hut, and we sat down to talk. His clothes were simple, and yet adequate enough considering the place. Upon his head he wore a home-made hat plaited from fibre of a palm leaf, and round his waist a leather apron, held in its place by two old, silver coins. With the exception of hide sandals on his feet, and a red cloak of baize hung loosely on one shoulder, he was as naked as the day on which he first drew breath upon the earth. For all that, in his bearing he was dignified enough, and after placing a long-barrelled gun which he had snatched up hastily when I approached his house, against the wall, but well within his reach, he sat down and motioning me to the other chair began to talk as a man talks who has been long alone. Where had I come from? and how was it that I was dressed like a *Correntino*,* being as he imagined, a foreigner, perhaps a Spaniard, or some other "nation," that spoke no Guarani?

My horse, he did not know the brand, looked like a horse from the low countries down the river. I had better be careful of him, especially at night, or else the vampire bats would suck his blood. The tigers, too, were specially attracted to a white animal, but then white was such a colour

**Correntino*—one from the northern province of Corrientes.

for a gentleman, especially white with a black skin, suitable too for Paraguay, as a white horse is certain to swim well, and the old boat upon the Tebicuari had never been replaced, and I should have to cross in a canoe.

"Tell me," he said, "what are the 'nations' doing in Asunción? Is there a government, and who is president? What, General Caballero? Ah, I remember him, a barefoot boy, running about till Lopez took his pretty sister to live with him. Madame Lynch was not well pleased at it . . . but then a president is just like God. What he wants, that he will have, be sure of it." It seemed his wife was dead or lost during the war, and when I pointed to some women, one pounding maize in a tall mortar, another picking oranges, and a third swinging in a white cotton hammock, he said, "Yes, women, as you see. In these times the poor things have got no husbands, and Christians have to do their best, out of pure charity."

Much did we talk about things interesting to men in Paraguay, the price of cattle and the like, the increase of tigers in the land, whether the road was open from Corrientes to Asunción through the Estero Nembucú, and if the Indians in the Chaco had been at what he called "their own," now that there was no law. On all these points I satisfied him as far as I was able, striving to make such news as I had gleaned upon my way, exact, but palatable.

When we had drunk a little *mate*, which after the Paraguayan country fashion was served quite cold, my host said, "By this time your horse's back must have got cool; one of the girls shall take him down to bathe."

As the girl led him past the roan, both neighed, and my host's horse reared and strove to break his rope.

When in a little the girl came back leading my horse all dripping from his bath, the roan with a wild plunge snapped his hide halter, and came galloping to meet my white, and, circling round him, at last stood with his red, wide-open nostrils close against his nose.

The horses seemed to talk, and mine plunged and would certainly have broken loose had not I run to him. My host, who had looked on with interest, told me his horse had been six months without once seeing another of his kind. "Let your horse loose," he said, "to play with him. Neither is shod, and they can do no harm to one another; let him loose, then, to play." Placing some canes and brushwood to block the road, he said, "Now they are safe; they cannot get away, and horses never go into the thick woods, and if they did they cannot possibly go far."

Somewhat reluctantly I let my horse run loose, leaving his headstall with a lazo trailing on the ground, knowing a horse in South America, once loose, is never willing to be caught.

The Paraguayan smiled, and as my horse passed by him, caught and undid the lazo, saying, "I answer for him with my head, and in the galloping that they will make, the rope would be a danger to them; besides, your horse will never try to get away."

For hours the horses played, leaping about like lambs, galloping to and fro, now rearing up and now coming down with their legs across each other's shoulders on their backs. At nightfall we caught and tied them close to each other, and after feeding them with maize cut down bundles of green *pindó*,* heaping it up before them for the night. When we had had our supper, which, if I remember after thirty years, was a rough stew of rice and *charqui* (dried meat), which we ate using our long knives for spoons, we sat against the corner of the house, swinging our tilted chairs. The women brought us green cigars, and one of them, taking a cracked guitar, some of whose strings were mended up with copper wire and some with bits of hide, sang what is called a *Triste*, as the fireflies flitted through the trees.

"Don Rigoberto," said my host (for my own name was unfamiliar to him, and to pronounce it with more ease he

Pindó—the soft inner leaves of the pindó palm.

altered it; perhaps for euphony), "look at the animals." I looked, and they had finished eating and stood with their heads resting on each other's shoulders, like the advertisement of Thorley's food for cattle, which I remember in my youth at railway stations. "Two years," he said, "I was in prison in Asunción, in the time of Lopez, not the one that José Diabo killed at Tacurupitá, but his old father Don Antonio. Days passed, and weeks and years, and all the time I never saw a man, for they let down my food and water by a string. When I got out, the first man that I met was to me as a long-lost brother. . . . I went and kissed him in the street. Therefore, Don Rigoberto, I know what my horse feels alone here in this *roza* (clearing), with not a soul of his own kind to say a word to him. This day has been a *fiesta* for him, and now let us repeat the rosary, and then to bed. . . . To-morrow is another day."

I fear the part I took in the repetition of the simple prayers was fragmentary; but at the break of day, or, to be accurate, about an hour before the dawn, I saddled up and bade my host good-bye. As I rode out into the dewy trail a thick white mist enveloped everything. It blotted out the lonely clearing in the first few yards. It dulled the shrill, high neighings of the roan, who plunged and reared upon his rope. Through the long, silent alleys of the primeval forest they sounded fainter as I rode, until at last they ceased, leaving their sadness still echoing after thirty—or is it five-and-thirty?—years, fixed in my memory.

TRUE TO TYPE

SOMEONE or other has said the dead have a being of their own, as we confess by saying such a one is dead, just as we say he is alive.

The author of the saying seems to have felt the dead had feelings and were not merely essences purified, quite separate and unapproachable by us. Few wish to see, even to think about, their dead "crowned with an aureole." We want them just as they were, just as we knew them, in their life. The rest is vanity, vanity of vanities, and all the creeds are impotent to help. At best they are an anæsthetic, such as curare, which holds the suffering animal paralysed, so that the operator may not feel the pain that it endures or get his hands scratched. So we grieve on, watching the trees turn red and yellow in the fall, blossom again in spring, and be alive with bees in summer, in winter swaying and cracking in the wind.

This is because we never feel the dead have a distinct and real being of their own. In olden times, in Scotland, people thought differently, and it was held that too much grieving for the dead, vexed them and broke their rest.

I remember once, coming long years ago to an outlying settlement in the province of Buenos Aires, where all the people came, I think, from Inverness-shire; but, anyhow, once on a time they had been Scotch. Their names were Highland, but were pronounced by those who bore them after the Spanish way, as Camerón, and McIntyré, McLéán, Fergusón, and others, which they had altered in the current of their speech, so as to be unrecognisable except to those who spoke the language and knew the names under their proper forms.

None of these Scoto-Argentines spoke English, although

some knew a few words of Gaelic, which I imagine they pronounced as badly as their names.

Four generations—for most of them had left their glens after Culloden—had wrought strange changes in the type. They all were dark, tall, sinewy men, riders before the Lord, and celebrated in the district where they lived as being *muy gaucho* (gaucho to the hilt)—that is, adroit with *bolas* and lazo, just as the Arabs say a man, is a right Arab, when they commend his skill in horsemanship. Having left Scotland after the Forty-Five, most of their forebears had been Catholics, and their descendants naturally belonged to the same faith, though as there was no church in all their settlement I fancy most of them believed rather in meat cooked in the hide and a good glass either of Caña (rum) or Carlón (a kind of wine), than dogmas of their creed.

Horses stood nodding in the sun before the door of every house.

Packs of gaunt, yellow dogs slumbered, with one eye open, in the shade.

The bones of the last cow killed lay in the little plaza of the settlement, and bullock-carts, with cumbrous, high wheels and thatched-like cottages, were left as islands here and there in the great sea of grass that surged up to the houses, without a garden or a cultivated field to break its billowing.

Two little stores, in which were piled up hides and sacks of wood, supplied the place with the few outside luxuries the people used, as sardines, black cigarettes, figs, raisins, bags of hard biscuits, sugar, red wine from Catalonia, and *caña* from Brazil.

Climate had proved a stronger force than race, and for the most part the descendants of the Gael were almost indistinguishable in looks from all the other dwellers on the plains. They themselves did not think so, and talked about their neighbours with a fine scorn as "natives," and were paid back in kind by them with the nickname of "*Protestantes*," a most unjust reproach to the descendants of the men who lost

their all for their old kings and faith.

Protestants they certainly were not, nor for that matter very Catholic, for, as a general rule, people who dwell on plains, far from the world, have less religion than those who live in hills. Still, in the settlement of San Andrés—for the first settlers had called it after the patron saint of their old home—some of their racial traits still lingered fitfully. Born in a country where neither sweet religion nor her twin sister superstition ever had much influence upon the people (who ever saw a Gaucho either religious or the least superstitious?), in San Andrés a belief in fairies and the second sight still lingered in men's minds, with many a superstition more consonant with mountains and with mists, than the keen atmosphere and the material life of the wild southern plains.

Unlike the Gauchos and the Arabs, who bury, as it seems, in the most open place that they can find, leaving the dead, as it were, always with the living, as if they thought the pressure of a passing foot somehow brought consolation to those lying beneath the ground, these Protestants railed off their little cemetery with a high fence of *ñandubay*. The untrimmed posts stuck up knotty and gnarled just as they do in a corral, but all the graves had head- and foot-stones, mostly of hard and undecaying wood, giving an air as of a graveyard in Lochaber by some deserted strath.

There, "Anastasio McIntyré, killed by the Indians," rested in peace. "May God have mercy on him."

A little further on, "Cruz Camerón, assassinated by his friends," expected glory through the intermediation of the saints. "Passers-by, pray for him."

Amparo, widow of Rodrigo Chisholm, lost at sea, had reared a monument in stone, brought from the capital, on which was cut a schooner foundering, with a man praying on the poop. Her pious faith in his salvation and a due sense of local colour showed themselves in a few lines of verse in which the poet, whilst deploring the sad fate of Roderick, cut off so far away from wife and family, was confident that

heaven was just as close at sea as on *la tierra firme*, and that the Lord High Admiral Christ watched over seafarers.

Such was the village, or, as the Gauchos used to say, the *pago*, for, for a league or two on every side, these Scoto-Argentines were the chief settlers upon the land. Indians occasionally harried their flocks and herds, and burned outlying ranches, but nowhere found stouter resistance than from the dwellers in San Andrés, so that, as a general rule, they used to leave the settlement alone.

The patriarchal manners which their forefathers had brought from the Highlands, joined to the curious old-fashioned customs common in those days in Buenos Aires, had formed a race apart, in which Latin materialism strove with the Celtic fervour, and neither gained the day.

A grave sententiousness marked all the older men, whose speech was an amalgam of strange proverbs, drawn from their daily lives. They used to pass their evenings playing the guitar and improvising couplets, whilst the square bottle of trade gin went round, each sipping from the same glass and passing it along. "Never go to a house to ask for a fresh horse when you see that the dogs are thin," one tall, red-bearded man would say, to which his fellow answered, "Arms are necessary, but no one can tell when." "A scabby calf lives all the winter and dies when spring comes in," and "When a poor man has a spree something is sure to turn out wrong with him," were specimens of their wit and humour, not much inferior after all, to those recorded of much greater men than them, in serious histories.

Sheep-shearings and cattle-markings were their festivities, and now and then, on their best horses, loaded down with plate, they tilted at the ring. The grassy pampa, stretching like the sea on every side of them, but broken as with islands here and there by white *estancia* (ranch) houses set in their ring of peach groves, limited their horizon, just as a sailor's view is limited on board a ship, to a scant league or two.

In that horizon all of them were born, and most of them

had never passed outside of it, except some few who upon rare occasions had gone to Buenos Aires with a troop of cattle, and had returned to talk about its wonders for the remainder of their lives.

Still, none of them were boors, but had the natural good manners both of the Gaucho and the Highlander. The forms of courtesy were long and ceremonious, and when friends met upon the plain, reining their horses in to show how sharply they were bitted, they used to ask minutely after each other's health, and of the state in which each member of the family found himself, and then, with an inquiry after a strayed colt, touching their stiff-brimmed hats with a brown, weather-beaten finger, just slack their reins a little, and separate, each going at a slow canter through the grass, the wind blowing their ponchos out like sails, and making their long hair wave about like a great bunch of water-weeds moved by the current of a stream.

This was the settlement which no doubt long ago has turned into a town, with modern improvements, electric lights and drains, beggars and churches; and the few settlers of the older type most probably have all retired into the wilder districts or become millionaires by the increasing value of their lands.

There, though, the older spirit ruled, and the men who spoke Gaelic, or even those whose fathers once had spoken what they called *el Gaelico*, were looked upon as the interpreters of the spirit of the race. Of these Don Alejandro Chisholm was the chief.

Tall and grey-bearded, he had that look of shagginess which marks the Highlander. Though he knew but a few words himself, his father used to croon old Gaelic songs, and all his childhood had been passed listening to the traditions which his people treasured in their minds. Somehow they looked upon them as their chief distinction, and seemed to feel by their possession that they were in some way or another superior to the rest of those with whom they lived,

the men who passed their lives caring for nothing but the present, whilst they lived in the past.

Don Alejandro used to say: "A native has very little soul. When a friend dies he never thinks of him again, and still less sees him. We, on the other hand, have glimpses now and then of those who leave us, but whose spirits hover about the places that they love."

His daughter, Saturnina, a tall, dark girl, willowy and slight, had married Anacleto, her first cousin, and thus, as her father, with true Highland pride in lineage, used to observe, had never changed her name. Her husband, Anacleto, was an amalgam of the Scot and Argentine. Speaking no word of English or of Gaelic, he yet esteemed himself as half a foreigner, although he was a Gaucho to the core. He and his wife were married in a church, a circumstance which marked them out, and people speaking of them used to say they were the couple "married in Latin," which gave them much consideration and a sort a rank. Whether because of the unusual sanctity that blessed their union, from accident or natural causes, their marriage was so happy that throughout the settlement people spoke of a happy couple as being as well mated as *el matrimonio Chisholm*, and looked on them with pride, as being somehow on a different plane from those who perhaps were married by some ambulatory priest, after their children had been born.

They had no children, and perhaps on that account were more attached to one another than are those couples whose love is, as it were, dispersed, having more objects on which to spend itself.

There seemed to grow between them that curious identity of mind which comes to all women and all men who have lived long together, but in their case was so much marked that they divined beforehand each other's thoughts, and acted on them almost without words. On the long journeys which the husband took with cattle, his wife used to declare she always knew all he was thinking of, and he, on his return,

either to please her, or because she really had guessed right, always confirmed her words. The idea of death sometimes must have presented itself before their minds, but, like most happy people, probably only as a calamity, which might befall humanity in general, but could not touch themselves.

Don Alejandro, who in his long life had seen misfortunes, and was the last of all his race except his daughter, used to look sadly on them, and shaking his grey head, say with a sigh: "God grant I may not live to see the death of either of them. The children, though it is a bad comparison, Lord pardon me for likening Christians to brute beasts, remind me of two horses that I had that followed one another. One broke its neck out ostrich-hunting, and the other never seemed right, and pined in misery after its friend had died."

The inevitable came, when Anacleto was away, far on the southern frontier, out on the boleada, beyond the Napostá.

Never before had he been so long separated from his wife. Three months had passed, and now, as he drew close to San Andrés, riding a tired horse, brown, dirty, and with the oppression that the north wind often brings in Buenos Aires weighing upon his mind, the well-known objects seemed to rise out of the plain, just as an island seems to rise out of the sea, although the men on board the ship know it is there, and have been laying off their course to make it, since the beginning of their voyage. He saw the peach *montes* which he had known from childhood circling his neighbours' farms. He crossed the sluggish, muddy stream, bordered with dark green *sarandis*, hitting the pass with the unerring accuracy of the man born upon the plains. Feeling his horse's mouth, he touched him with the spur, and struck into a lope. Passing the little inequalities of ground, the swells and billows which the dwellers on the pampa know as lomas or cuchillas, and recollect as well as Scotchmen recollect their hills, though they are almost imperceptible to strangers, he saw the well-remembered old ombú tree of the settlement.

Eyes just as keen as were his own had seen him too, and to his great surprise a horsemen galloped out to meet him, and as he came a little nearer he recognised the well-known piebald that Don Alejandro cherished as the apple of his eye. Sitting upright in the saddle, and swaying lightly, as if he had been five-and-twenty, to every movement of his horse, Don Alejandro rapidly drew near. Just about twenty yards from where his son-in-law was labouring along on his tired horse he checked the piebald, and stopped as if turned instantly to stone. "Welcome, my son," he said. "Your horse looks tired, but he will take you home quite soon enough."

The words froze upon Anacleto's lips when he looked at the old man's countenance and saw how white and drawn he had become.

"Tell me at once!" he cried; "I see the tidings in your face of evil augury."

When they had drawn a little nearer Don Alejandro grasped his hand, and after looking at the horse his son-in-law bestrode, pointed towards the little cemetery, and said: "Let us go there, my son. . . . If we go slowly your horse can carry you."

Dismounting at the gate, they tied their horses to a post, and entering, the old man led the traveller up to a little mound.

"Underneath this our treasure lies," he murmured gravely, and with the air of one who has got done with tears after long weeks of grief.

They stood and gazed, holding each other's hands, until Don Alejandro said: "Weep, son, for God has given tears for the soul's health. . . . Laughter and tears are the two things that lift us higher than the beasts."

His son-in-law threw himself on the grave, driving his fingers into the black soil, and lay there, tired, dirty, and unkempt, like a great wounded bird.

At last he felt a hand upon his shoulder, and heard a voice, which seemed to come from a great distance, saying: "Come,

let us go now, and let our horses loose. In half an hour it will be night."

When they had reached their home they both unsaddled. The piebald, with a neigh, bounded away into the night, but Anacleto's horse stood for a moment, and then lay down and rolled, and rising shook the dust out of his coat, just as a water-dog shakes himself after a long swim.

"He will do well," Don Alejandro said. "When a horse rolls like that after a journey it is a sign that he is strong."

Over the *mate*, seated round the fire, on the low, solid, wooden benches men used to use out on the pampa, the wanderer heard of how his wife had died.

Next day he passed seated upon her grave, silent and stupefied with grief.

Then for a day or two he lounged about, going down to the cemetery at intervals and looking through the posts, like some wild animal.

Weeks passed, and he still roamed about, speaking to no one, but riding off across the plains, returning always just at sundown, to tie his horse up close to the cemetery gate and stand with his head pressed against the bars looking towards the grave. At last Don Alejandro, fearing that he was going mad, as they sat at the end of a hot day, began to speak to him, saying: "It is not well to grieve too long. It is, as we may say, a selfishness. My father, who knew the older generation, those who lost everything for their religion and their king, had listened in his youth to all the lore that they brought with them from that far region where, as they say, the mist blurs everything. My father spoke 'Gaelico' "—he said the word almost with reverence—"and those who spoke it always were versed in the traditions of our race. He used to tell me that to grieve for the dead beyond due measure disturbed them in their graves, and brought their spirits weeping back again. So I have dried my tears." As he said this he drew his hand across his eyes, and, looking at it, saw that it was dry.

"Grieve no more, Anacleto. We cannot call her back to us

alive. To pain the spirit by our selfishness, that would be cowardly."

They sat till it was almost sunset, and then Don Alejandro went down to the corral to see the animals shut in, just in the way that he had gone each evening, for the last forty years.

The sun set in a glare, the hot, north wind blowing as from a furnace, making the cattle droop their heads, and bringing troops of horses, with a noise like thunder, down to the water-holes.

The *teru teros*,* flying low, like gulls upon the sea, almost unseen in the fast-coming darkness, called uncannily. The tame *chajá*† screamed harshly behind the cattle-pens.

A boy, riding upon a sheepskin, drove the tame horses into the corral.

The sheep were folded, and in the dark leaves of the old ombú beside the door, the fireflies glistened, and from the pampa rose the acrid smell that the first freshness of the evening draws from the heated ground. Coming out of the rancho Anacleto looked across the plain.

His eyes were full of tears, but with a gulp he choked them, and muttering to himself, "No, it would be cowardly to break her rest, Don Alejandro says so; he had it from his father, who spoke Gaelico," he slowly lit a cigarette, and in the last rays of the light, watched the smoke curl up in the air, blue and impalpable.

*A South American bird resembling a gull.

†Horned Screamer; a large bird.

HEREDITY

RIGHT along the frontier between Uruguay and Rio Grande, the southern province of Brazil, the Spanish and the Portuguese sit face to face, as they have sat for ages, looking at, but never understanding, one another, both in the Old and the New World.

In Tuy and Valenza, Monzon and Salvatierra, at Poncho Verde and Don Pedrito, Rivera and Santa Ana do Libramento, and far away above Cruz Alta, where the two clumps of wood that mark old camps of the two people are called O Matto Castelhano and O Matto Portuguez, the rivalry of centuries is either actual or at least commemorated on the map.

The border-line that once made different peoples of the dwellers at Floriston and Gretna still prevails in the little castellated towns, which snarl at one another across the Minho, just as they did of old.

"Those people in Valenza would steal the sacrament," says the street urchin playing on the steps of the half fortalice, half church that is the cathedral of Tuy on the Spanish side.

His fellow in Valenza spits towards Tuy and remarks, "From Spain come neither good marriages nor the wholesome winds."

So on to Salvatierra and Monzon, or any other of the villages or towns upon the river, and in the current of the native speech there still remains some saying of the kind, with its sharp edges still unworn after six centuries of use. Great is the power of artificial barriers to restrain mankind. No proverb ever penned is more profound than that which sets out, "Fear guards the vineyard, not the fence around it."

So Portuguese and Spaniards in their peninsula have fought and hated and fought and ridiculed each other after the

fashion of children that have quarrelled over a broken toy. Blood and an almost common speech, for both speak one Romance when all is said, have both been impotent against the custom-house, the flag, the foolish dynasty, for few countries in the world have had more foolish kings than Spain and Portugal.

That this should be so in the Old World is natural enough, for the dead hand still rules, and custom and tradition have more strength than race and creed; but that the hatred should have been transplanted to America, and still continue, is a proof that folly never dies.

In the old towns on either side of the Minho the exterior life of the two peoples is the same.

In the stone-built, arcaded plazas women still gather round the fountain and fill their iron-hooped water-barrels through long tin pipes, shaped like the tin valences used in wine-stores. Donkeys stand at the doors, carrying charcoal in esparto baskets, whether in Portugal or Spain, and goats parade the streets driven by goatherds, wearing shapeless, thickly-napped felt hats and leather overalls.

The water-carrier in both countries calls out "agua-a-a," making it sound like Arabic, and long trains of mules bring brushwood for the baker's furnace (even as in Morocco), or great nets of close-chopped straw for horses' fodder.

At eventide the girls walk on the plaza, their mothers, aunts, or servants following them as closely as their shadows on a sunny afternoon. In quiet streets lovers on both sides of the river talk from a first-floor balcony to the street, or whisper through the window-bars on the ground floor. The little shops under the low arches of the arcaded streets have yellow flannel drawers for men and petticoats of many colours hanging close outside their doors, on whose steps sleep yellow dogs.

The jangling bells in the decaying lichen-grown old towers of the churches jangle and clang in the same key, and as appears without a touch of *odium theologicum*. The full bass

voices boom from the choirs, in which the self-same organs in their walnut cases have the same rows of golden trumpets sticking out into the aisle.

One faith, one speech, one mode of daily life, the same sharp "green" wine, the same bread made of maize and rye, and the same heaps of red tomatoes and green peppers glistening in the sun in the same market-places, and yet a rivalry and a difference as far apart as east from west still separates them.

In both their countries the axles of the bullock-carts, with solid wheels and wattled hurdle sides, like those upon a Roman coin, still creak and whine to keep away the wolves.

In the soft landscape the maize fields wave in the rich hollows on both sides of the Minho.

The pine woods mantle the rocky hills that overhang the deep-sea lochs that burrow in both countries deep into the entrails of the land.

The women, with their many-coloured petticoats and handkerchiefs, chaffer at the same fairs to which their husbands ride their ponies in their straw cloaks.

At "romerías" the peasantry dance to the bagpipe and the drum the self-same dances, and both climb the self-same steep grey steps through the dark lanes, all overhung with gorse and broom, up to the Calvaries, where the three crosses take on the self-same growth of lichen and of moss. Yet the "boyero" who walks before the placid oxen, with their cream-coloured flanks and liquid eyes of onyx, feels he is different, right down to the last molecule of his being, from the man upon the other side.

So was it once, and perhaps is to-day, with those who dwell in Liddes or Bewcastle dales. Spaniard and Portuguese, as Scot and Englishman in older times, can never see one matter from the same point of view. The Portuguese will say that the Castilian is a rogue, and the Castilian returns the compliment. Neither have any reason to support their view, for who wants reason to support that which he feels is true.

It may be that the Spaniard is a little rougher and the Portuguese more cunning; but if it is the case or not, the antipathy remains, and has been taken to America.

From the Laguna de Merin to the Cuareim, that is to say, along a frontier of two hundred leagues, the self-same feeling rules upon both sides of the line. There, as in Portugal and Spain, although the country, whether in Uruguay, or in Brazil, is little different, yet it has suffered something indefinable by being occupied by members of the two races so near and yet so different from one another.

Great rolling seas of waving grass, broken by a few stony hills, are the chief features of the landscape of the frontiers in both republics. Estancia houses, dazzlingly white, buried in peach and fig groves, dot the plains, looking like islands in the sea of grass. Great herds of cattle roam about, and men on horseback, galloping like clockwork, sail across the plains like ships upon a sea. Along the riverbanks grow strips of thorny trees, and as the frontier line trends northward palm-trees appear, and monkeys chatter in the woods. Herds of wild asses, shyer than antelopes, gaze at the passing horsemen, scour off when he approaches, and are lost into the haze. Stretches of purple borage, known as La Flor Morada, carpet the ground in spring and early summer, giving place later on to red verbena; and on the edges of the streams the tufts of the tall Pampa grass recall the feathers on a Pampa Indian's spear.

Bands of grave ostriches feed quietly upon the tops of hills, and stride away when frightened, down the wind, with wings stretched out to catch the breeze.

Clothes are identical, or almost so; the poncho and the loose trousers stuffed into high patent-leather boots, the hat kept in its place by a black ribbon with two tassels, are to be seen on both sides of the frontier. Only in Brazil a sword stuck through the girth replaces the long knife of Uruguay. Perhaps in that one item all the differences between the races manifests itself, for the sword is, as it were, a symbol, for no

one ever saw one drawn or used in any way but as an ornament. It is, in fact, but a survival of old customs, which are cherished both by the Portuguese and the Brazilians as the apple of the eye.

The vast extent of the territory of Brazil, its inaccessibility, and the enormous distances to be travelled from the interior to the coast, and the sense of remoteness from the outer world, have kept alive a type of man not to be found in any other country where the Christian faith prevails. Risings of fanatics still are frequent; one is going on to-day in Paraná, and that of the celebrated Antonio Concelheiro, twenty years ago, shook the whole country to its core. Slavery existed in the memory of people still alive. Women in the remoter towns are still secluded almost as with the Moors. The men still retain something of the Middle Ages in their love of show. All in the province of Rio Grande are great horsemen, and all use silver trappings on a black horse, and all have horses bitted so as to turn round in the air, just as a hawk turns on the wing.

The sons of men who have been slaves abound in all the little frontier towns, and old grey-headed negroes, who have been slaves themselves, still hang about the great estates. Upon the other side, in Uruguay, the negro question was solved once and for all in the Independence Wars, for then the negroes were all formed into battalions by themselves and set in the forefront of the battle, to die for liberty in a country where they all were slaves the month before. War turned them into heroes, and sent them out to die.

When once their independence was assured, the Uruguayans fell into line like magic with the modern trend of thought. Liberty to them meant absolute equality, for throughout the land no snob is found to leave a slug's trail on the face of man by his subserviency.

Women were held free, that is, as free as it is possible for them to be in any Latin-peopled land. Across the line, even to-day, a man may stay a week in a Brazilian country house

and never see a woman but a mulata girl or an old negro crone. Still he feels he is watched by eyes he never sees, listens to voices singing or laughing, and a sense of mystery prevails.

Spaniards and Portuguese in the New World have blended just as little as they have done at home. Upon the frontier all the wilder spirits of Brazil and Uruguay have congregated. There they pursue the life, but little altered, that their fathers led full fifty years ago. All carry arms, and use them on small provocation, for if an accident takes place the frontier shields the slayer, for to pursue him usually entails a national quarrel, and so the game goes on.

So Jango Chaves, feeling inclined for sport, or, as he might have said, to "brincar un bocadinho," saddled up his horse. He mounted, and, as his friends were looking on, ran it across the plaza of the town, and, turning like a seagull in its flight, came back to where his friends were standing, and stopped it with a jerk.

His silver harness jingled, and his heavy spurs, hanging loosely on his high-heeled boots, clanked like fetters, as his active little horse bounded into the air and threw the sand up in a shower.

The rider, sitting him like a statue, with the far-off look horsemen of every land assume when riding a good horse and when they know they are observed, slackened his hand and let him fall into a little measured trot, arching his neck and playing with the bit, under which hung a silver eagle on a hinge. Waving his hand towards his friends, Jango rode slowly through the town. He passed through sandy streets of flat-roofed, whitewashed houses, before whose doors stood hobbled horses nodding in the sun.

He rode past orange gardens, surrounded by brown walls of sun-baked bricks with the straw sticking in them, just as it had dried. In the waste the castor-oil bushes formed little jungles, out of which peered cats, exactly as a tiger peers out of a real jungle in the woods.

The sun poured down, and was reverberated back from the white houses, and on the great gaunt building, where the captain-general lived, floated the green-and-yellow flag of the republic, looking like a bandana handkerchief. He passed the negro ranchería, without which no such town as Santa Anna do Libramento is complete, and might have marked, had he not been too much used to see them, the naked negro children playing in the sand. Possibly, if he marked them, he referred to them as "cachorrinhos pretos," for the old leaven of the days of slavery is strongly rooted in Brazil. So he rode on, a slight and graceful figure, bending to each movement of his horse, his mobile, olive-coloured features looking like a bronze masque in the fierce downpour of the sun.

As he rode on, his whip, held by a thong and dangling from his fingers, swung against his horse's flanks, keeping time rhythmically to its pace. He crossed the rivulet that flows between the towns and came out on the little open plain that separates them. From habit, or because he felt himself amongst unfriendly or uncomprehended people, he touched his knife and his revolvers, hidden beneath his summer poncho, with his right hand, and with his bridle arm held high, ready for all eventualities passed into just such another sandy street as he had left behind.

Save that all looked a little newer, and that the stores were better supplied with goods, and that there were no negro huts, the difference was slight between the towns. True that the green-and-yellow flag had given place to the barred blue-and-white of Uruguay. An armed policeman stood at the corners of the main thoroughfares, and water-carts went up and down at intervals. The garden in the plaza had a well-tended flower-garden.

A band was playing in the middle of it, and Jango could not fail to notice that Rivera was more prosperous than was his native town.

Whether that influenced him, or whether it was the glass of *caña* which he had at the first *pulpería*, is a moot point, or

whether the old antipathy between the races brought by his ancestors from the peninsula; anyhow, he left his horse untied, and with the reins thrown down before it as he got off to have his drink. When he came out, a policeman called to him to hobble it or tie it up.

Without a word he gathered up his reins, sprang at a bound upon his horse, and, drawing his mother-of-pearl-handled pistol, fired at the policeman almost as he sprang. The shot threw up a shower of sand just in the policeman's face, and probably saved Jango's life. Drawing his pistol, the man fired back, but Jango, with a shout and pressure of his heels, was off like lightning, firing as he rode, and zig-zagging across the street. The policeman's shot went wide, and Jango, turning in the saddle, fired again and missed.

By this time men with pistols in their hands stood at the doors of all the houses; but the Brazilian passed so rapidly, throwing himself alternately now on the near side, now on the off side of his horse, hanging by one foot across the croup and holding with the other to the mane, that he presented no mark for them to hit.

As he passed by the *jefatura* where the alcalde and his friends were sitting smoking just before the door, he fired with such good aim that a large piece of plaster just above their heads fell, covering them with dust.

Drawing his second pistol and still firing as he went, he dashed out of the town, in spite of shots from every side, his horse bounding like lightning as his great silver spur ploughed deep into its sides. When he had crossed the little bit of neutral ground, and just as a patrol of cavalry appeared, ready to gallop after him, a band of men from his own town came out to meet him.

He stopped, and shouting out defiance to the Uruguayans, drew up his horse, and lit a cigarette. Then, safe beyond the frontier, trotted on gently to meet his friends, his horse shaking white foam from off its bit, and little rivulets of blood dripping down from its sides into the sand.

EL TANGO ARGENTINO

MOTOR-CARS swept up to the covered passage of the front door of the hotel, one of those international caravansaries that pass their clients through a sort of vulgarising process that blots out every type. It makes the Argentine, the French, the Englishman, and the American all alike before the power of wealth.

The cars surged up as silently as snow falls from a fir-tree in a thaw, and with the same soft swishing noise. Tall, liveried porters opened the doors (although, of course, each car was duly furnished with a footman) so nobly that any one of them would have graced any situation in the State.

The ladies stepped down delicately, showing a fleeting vision of a leg in a transparent stocking, just for an instant, through the slashing of their skirts. They knew that every man, their footman, driver, the giant watchers at the gate, and all who at the time were going into the hotel, saw and were moved by what they saw just for a moment; but the fact did not trouble them at all. It rather pleased them, for the most virtuous feel a pleasurable emotion when they know that they excite. So it will be for ever, for thus and not by votes alone they show that they are to the full men's equals, let the law do its worst.

Inside the hotel, heated by steam, and with an atmosphere of scent and flesh that went straight to the head just as the fumes of whisky set a drinker's nerves agog, were seated all the finest flowers of the cosmopolitan society of the French capital.

Lesbos had sent its legions, and women looked at one another appreciatively, scanning each item of their neighbour's clothes, and with their colour heightening when by chance their eyes met those of another priestess of their sect.

Rich rastaquaoures, their hats too shiny, and their boots too tight, their coats fitting too closely, their sticks mounted with great gold knobs, walked about or sat at little tables, all talking strange varieties of French.

Americans, the men apparently all run out of the same mould, the women apt as monkeys to imitate all that they saw in dress, in fashion and in style, and more adaptable than any other women in the world from lack of all traditions, conversed in their high nasal tones. Spanish-Americans from every one of the Republics were well represented, all talking about money: of how Doña Fulana Perez had given fifteen hundred francs for her new hat, or Don Fulano had just scored a million on the Bourse.

Jews and more Jews, and Jewesses and still more Jewesses, were there, some of them married to Christians and turned Catholic, but betrayed by their Semitic type, although they talked of Lourdes and of the Holy Father with the best.

After the "five-o'clock," turned to a heavy meal of toast and buns, of Hugel loaf, of sandwiches, and of hot cake, the scented throng, restored by the refection after the day's hard work of shopping, of driving here and there like souls in purgatory to call on people that they detested, and other labours of a like nature, slowly adjourned to a great hall in which a band was playing. As they walked through the passages, men pressed close up to women and murmured in their ears, telling them anecdotes that made them flush and giggle as they protested in an unprotesting style. Those were the days of the first advent of the Tango Argentino, the dance that since has circled the whole world, as it were, in a movement of the hips. Ladies pronounced it charming as they half closed their eyes and let a little shiver run across their lips. Men said it was the only dance that was worth dancing. It was so Spanish, so unconventional, and combined all the æsthetic movements of the figures on an Etruscan vase with the strange grace of the Hungarian gipsies . . . it was so, as one may say, so . . . as you may say . . . you know.

When all were seated, the band, Hungarians, of course—oh, those dear gipsies!—struck out into a rhythm, half ragtime, half habanera, canaille, but sensuous, and hands involuntarily, even the most aristocratic hands—of ladies whose immediate progenitors had been pork-packers in Chicago, or gambusinos who had struck it rich in Zacatecas—tapped delicately, but usually a little out of time, upon the backs of chairs.

A tall young man, looking as if he had got a holiday from a tailor's fashion plate, his hair sleek, black and stuck down to his head with a cosmetic, his trousers so immaculately creased they seemed cut out of cardboard, led out a girl dressed in a skirt so tight that she could not have moved in it had it not been cut open to the knee.

Standing so close that one well-creased trouser leg disappeared in the tight skirt, he clasped her round the waist, holding her hand almost before her face. They twirled about, now bending low, now throwing out a leg, and then again revolving, all with a movement of the hips that seemed to blend the well-creased trouser and the half-open skirt into one inharmonious whole. The music grew more furious and the steps multiplied, till with a bound the girl threw herself for an instant into the male dancer's arms, who put her back again upon the ground with as much care as if she had been a new-laid egg, and the pair bowed and disappeared.

Discreet applause broke forth, and exclamations such as "wonderful," "what grace," "Vivent les espagnols," for the discriminating audience took no heed of independence days, of mere political changes and the like, and seemed to think that Buenos Aires was a part of Spain, never having heard of San Martin, Bolivar, Paez, and their fellow-liberators.

Paris, London and New York were to that fashionable crowd the world, and anything outside—except, of course, the Hungarian gipsies and the Tango dancers—barbarous and beyond the pale.

After the Tango came "La Maxixe brésilienne," rather more languorous and more befitting to the dwellers in the tropics than was its cousin from the plains. Again the discreet applause broke out, the audience murmuring "charming," that universal adjective that gives an air of being in a perpetual pastrycook's when ladies signify delight. Smiles and sly glances at their friends showed that the dancers' efforts at indecency had been appreciated.

Slowly the hall and tea-rooms of the great hotel emptied themselves, and in the corridors and passages the smell of scent still lingered, just as stale incense lingers in a church.

Motor-cars took away the ladies and their friends, and drivers, who had shivered in the cold whilst the crowd inside sweated in the central heating, exchanged the time of day with the liveried doorkeepers, one of them asking anxiously: "Dis, Anatole, as-tu vu mes vaches?"

With the soft closing of a well-hung door the last car took its perfumed freight away, leaving upon the steps a group of men, who remained talking over or, as they would say, undressing all the ladies who had gone.

"Argentine Tango, eh?" I thought, after my friends had left me all alone. Well, well, it has changed devilishly upon its passage overseas, even discounting the difference of the setting of the place where first I saw it danced so many years ago. So, sauntering down, I took a chair far back upon the terrace of the Café de la Paix, so that the sellers of *La Patrie*, and the men who have some strange new toy, or views of Paris in a long album like a broken concertina, should not tread upon my toes.

Over a Porto Blanc and a Brazilian cigarette, lulled by the noise of Paris and the raucous cries of the street-vendors, I fell into a doze.

Gradually the smell of petrol and of horse-dung, the two most potent fumes in our modern life, seemed to be blown away. Dyed heads and faces scraped till they looked blue as a baboon's; young men who looked like girls, with

painted faces and with mincing airs; the raddled women, ragged men, and hags huddled in knitted shawls, lame horses, and taxi-cab drivers sitting nodding on their boxes —all faded into space, and from the nothing that is the past arose another scene.

I saw myself with Witham and his brother, whose name I have forgotten, Eduardo Peña, Congreve, and Eustaquio Medina, on a small rancho in an elbow of the great River Yi. The rancho stood upon a little hill. A quarter of a mile or so away the dense and thorny monte of hard-wood trees that fringed the river seemed to roll up towards it like a sea. The house was built of yellow pine sent from the United States. The roof was shingled, and the rancho stood planked down upon the plain, looking exactly like a box. Some fifty yards away stood a thatched hut that served as kitchen, and on its floor the cattle herders used to sleep upon their horse-gear with their feet towards the fire.

The corrals for horses and for sheep were just a little farther off, and underneath a shed a horse stood saddled day in, day out, and perhaps does so yet, if the old rancho still resists the winds.

Four or five horses, saddled and bridled, stood tied to a great post, for we were just about to mount to ride a league or two to a Baile, at the house of Frutos Barragán. Just after sunset we set out, as the sweet scent that the grasses of the plains send forth after a long day of heat perfumed the evening air.

The night was clear and starry, and above our heads was hung the Southern Cross. So bright the stars shone out that one could see almost a mile away; but yet all the perspective of the plains and woods was altered. Hillocks were sometimes indistinguishable, at other times loomed up like houses. Woods seemed to sway and heave, and by the sides of streams bunches of Pampa grass stood stark as sentinels, their feathery tufts looking like plumes upon an Indian's lance.

The horses shook their bridles with a clear, ringing sound as they stepped double, and their riders, swaying lightly in their seats, seemed to form part and parcel of the animals they rode.

Now and then little owls flew noiselessly beside us, circling above our heads, and then dropped noiselessly upon a bush. Eustaquio Medina, who knew the district as a sailor knows the seas where he was born, rode in the front of us. As his horse shied at a shadow on the grass or at the bones of some dead animal, he swung his whip round ceaselessly, until the moonlight playing on the silver-mounted stock seemed to transform it to an aureole that flickered about his head. Now and then somebody dismounted to tighten up his girth, his horse twisting and turning round uneasily the while, and, when he raised his foot towards the stirrup, starting off with a bound.

Time seemed to disappear and space be swallowed in the intoxicating gallop, so that when Eustaquio Medina paused for an instant to strike the crossing of a stream, we felt annoyed with him, although no hound that follows a hot scent could have gone truer on his line.

Dogs barking close at hand warned us our ride was almost over, and as we galloped up a rise Eustaquio Medina pulled up and turned to us.

"There is the house," he said, "just at the bottom of the hollow, only five squares away," and as we saw the flicker of the lights, he struck his palm upon his mouth after the Indian fashion, and raised a piercing cry. Easing his hand, he drove his spurs into his horse, who started with a bound into full speed, and as he galloped down the hill we followed him, all yelling furiously.

Just at the hitching-post we drew up with a jerk, our horses snorting as they edged off sideways from the black shadow that it cast upon the ground. Horses stood about everywhere, some tied and others hobbled, and from the house there came the strains of an accordion and the tinkling of guitars.

Asking permission to dismount, we hailed the owner of the house, a tall, old Gaucho, Frutos Barragán, as he stood waiting by the door, holding a *mate* in his hand. He bade us welcome, telling us to tie our horses up, not too far out of sight, for, as he said, "It is not good to give facilities to rogues, if they should chance to be about."

In the low, straw-thatched rancho, with its eaves blackened by the smoke, three or four iron bowls, filled with mare's fat, and with a cotton wick that needed constant trimming, stuck upon iron cattle-brands, were burning fitfully.

They cast deep shadows in the corners of the room, and when they flickered up occasionally the light fell on the dark and sun-tanned faces of the tall, wiry Gauchos and the light cotton dresses of the women as they sat with their chairs tilted up against the wall. Some thick-set Basques, an Englishman or two in riding breeches, and one or two Italians made up the company. The floor was earth, stamped hard till it shone like cement, and as the Gauchos walked upon it, their heavy spurs clinked with a noise like fetters as they trailed them on the ground.

An old, blind Paraguayan played on the guitar, and a huge negro accompanied him on an accordion. Their united efforts produced a music which certainly was vigorous enough, and now and then, one or the other of them broke into a song, high-pitched and melancholy, which, if you listened to it long enough, forced you to try to imitate its wailing melody and its strange intervals.

Fumes of tobacco and rum hung in the air, and of a strong and heady wine from Catalonia, much favoured by the ladies, which they drank from a tumbler, passing it to one another, after the fashion of a grace-cup at a City dinner, with great gravity. At last the singing ceased, and the orchestra struck up a Tango, slow, marked, and rhythmical.

Men rose, and, taking off their spurs, walked gravely to the corner of the room where sat the women huddled together as if they sought protection from each other, and

with a compliment led them out upon the floor. The flowing poncho and the loose chiripá, which served as trousers, swung about just as the tartans of a Highlander swing as he dances, giving an air of ease to all the movements of the Gauchos as they revolved, their partners' heads peeping above their shoulders, and their hips moving to and fro.

At times they parted, and set to one another gravely, and then the man, advancing, clasped his partner round the waist and seemed to push her backwards, with her eyes half-closed and an expression of beatitude. Gravity was the keynote of the scene, and though the movements of the dance were as significant as it was possible for the dancers to achieve, the effect was graceful, and the soft, gliding motion and the waving of the parti-coloured clothes, wild and original, in the dim, flickering light.

Rum flowed during the intervals. The dancers wiped the perspiration from their brows, the men with the silk handkerchiefs they wore about their necks, the women with their sleeves. Tangos, *cielitos*, and *pericones* succeeded one another, and still the atmosphere grew thicker, and the lights seemed to flicker through a haze, as the dust rose from the mud floor. Still the old Paraguayan and the negro kept on playing with the sweat running down their faces, smoking and drinking rum in their brief intervals of rest, and when the music ceased for a moment, the wild neighing of a horse tied in the moonlight to a post, sounded as if he called his master to come out and gallop home again.

The night wore on, and still the negro and the Paraguayan stuck at their instruments. Skirts swung and ponchos waved, whilst *maté* circulated amongst the older men as they stood grouped about the door.

Then came a lull, and as men whispered in their partners' ears, telling them, after the fashion of the Gauchos, that they were lovely, their hair like jet, their eyes bright as "las tres Marias," and all the compliments which in their case were stereotyped and handed down for generations, loud

voices rose, and in an instant two Gauchos bounded out upon the floor.

Long silver-handled knives were in their hands, their ponchos wrapped round their left arms served them as bucklers, and as they crouched, like cats about to spring, they poured out blasphemies.

"Stop this!" cried Frutos Barragán; but even as he spoke a knife-thrust planted in the stomach stretched one upon the floor. Blood gushed out from his mouth, his belly fell like a pricked bladder, and a dark stream of blood trickled upon the ground as he lay writhing in his death agony.

The iron bowls were overturned, and in the dark girls screamed and the men crowded to the door. When they emerged into the moonlight, leaving the dying man upon the floor, the murderer was gone; and as they looked at one another there came a voice shouting out: "Adios, Barragán! Thus does Vicente Castro pay his debts when a man tries to steal his girl," and the faint footfalls of an unshod horse galloping far out upon the plain.

I started, and the waiter standing by my side said: "Eighty centimes"; and down the boulevard echoed the harsh cry: "*La Patrie*, achetez *La Patrie*," and the rolling of the cabs.

LE CHEF

JUST at the corner of the streets called Twenty-fifth of May and Calle de Cangallo stood Claraz's hotel. In those days, long before the city of La Plata rose and fell, before La Unión Cívica was known, and whilst the echoes of the Paraguayan war were still resounding in the River Plate, it was a busy spot. The life of Buenos Aires ran before the door. Only three squares away the two great Plazas, with their palaces and barracks, basked in the sun, or shivered in the wind, according as the Pampero whistled, or the hot north wind blew. The Stock Exchange was near; the mole within a stone's throw, and up the deep-cut Calle de Cangallo, which looked more like a dry canal than a great thoroughfare, stood several of the principal hotels. The house was built all round a courtyard, with a great archway over which were rooms upon an upper floor where Claraz kept his saddlery, his books, and natural history collections, and in which he generally lived, to be away from noise. The rest of the establishment was but one storey high, though being built upon a bank it looked right out across the River Plate, in Buenos Aires nearly thirty miles in breadth, so that the houses in La Colonia, on the other side, are only visible upon the clearest days. Claraz himself, a tall and black-haired Swiss, of all the men I ever saw, was the least fitted for the business of keeping an hotel. Well educated and with scientific tastes, his guests were almost all either commercial travellers or sheep and cattle farmers, who strode into the place with a Basque porter carrying their saddles, took off their pistols, hung them on their beds, and called for drink incontinently, stamping about the brick courtyard in their long riding-boots and spurs. As all the rooms looked out into the yard, the fashion was to leave the doors wide open and to converse

whilst lying on your bed, with anyone you knew. In some respects the place was like a school, with the initial difference that you were pretty sure to learn some things worth knowing after a day or two. Claraz himself, being a naturalist, knew all the animals and a percentage of the myriad shrubs and trees of the republic, and others in their several degrees were able to impart much knowledge of a varied kind and differing quality.

Kincaid from Patagonia had much Indian lore, and knew the chiefs of all the southern tribes. Though he lived out upon the fringe of Indian territory, and far removed from towns, his neighbours gauchos, and his life to herd his sheep and cattle all the day and sit down either alone or with his herdsmen in a hut at night to smoke and read a *Glasgow Herald* ten weeks old, which told him in eight columns all the ecclesiastic news of the Free Church and the Establishment, he yet remained a Scotchman, so Scotch that had you met him in a railway-carriage you would have thought him a new-comer fresh from Kircaldy or from Perth. Benitez Wilson, half Argentine, half Englishman, kept a *pulperia* in the south camp, and having been to England to be educated, had returned home again, more Argentine than ever, after the fashion of the Texan youth sent by his father to tour round Europe, who being asked on his return what mode of life he proposed to embrace, replied: "Guess, Poppa, that I'll have a horse-ranch out in Nueces County or down by Goliad." Thin, slight and dark, with long brown hands, and feet eternally imprisoned in tight patent-leather boots, he did not look the man to keep a frontier drinking-shop; but was reported, when a fight arose, to be a master of the art of throwing empty bottles, which he delivered like a Benjamite, and seldom missed his mark. What was worth knowing about racing on the flat (three squares or fifty) barebacked and owners up, he knew; and no one from the Tres Arroyos to Tandil was cunninger in the innumerable false starts which are the science of a gaucho race. His life

had made him taciturn, but when he chose he could discourse of many things with the strange double view of the mixed-blooded man, which makes him never quite at home with either race, and an eternal stranger in the land. The other guests were mostly bagmen, usually Frenchmen from Marseilles or Bordeaux, black-bearded, voluble and unilingual, for why should anyone whom God has blessed by making him a Frenchman struggle with other tongues? "You do not speak the language of the place," Benitez Wilson had remarked to Monsieur Lagadigadon. "Certainly not," he answered. "*Je parle français, et ça me suffit, voyez-vous.*" But notwithstanding their linguistic limitations, they were a jovial set, carrying destruction, as it seemed, amongst the female sex of every land, and passing hours relating all their conquests, although the listeners might well have been aware, by personal experience, that all the tales were false. They and a knot of Englishmen, mostly offshoots of county families, and known in Buenos Aires as the "Gentle Shepherds," made the most noise of all the visitors, and passed their time in general in the billiard-room, playing the cannon game, with lumps of chalk held in the bridge hand, with balls like turnips, and with cues like table legs.

The fashionable streets in which were situated the best shops cut the Cangallo at right angles, and even in those days had tramways running down them preceded by a boy on horseback who blew upon a horn, so that the curious little inn, even then, was an anachronism, though Buenos Aires still in some respects was primitive. Horses were commoner than dogs; they stood at every house, with their feet hobbled during the time their owners talked or drank, and now and then, when they got bored, they would hop off, raising their shackled feet like rocking-horses, and congregate in knots, where with their reins tied to the saddles drawing their heads into their chests, they stood and fabulated. Before the Stock Exchange dozens, or sometimes hundreds, stood, and stockbrokers felt their way cautiously

amongst them with propitiatory words, hissing and chirruping, and sometimes coming to a standstill, so to speak, storm stayed, amongst a sea of tails and hoofs, too difficult to pass. The presidential escort, dressed as exaggerated lancers, used to ride down the streets behind the carriage of the president, just as a troop of Indians rides behind a chief, all with their toes scarce touching their small native stirrups, their bodies swaying easily above the hips, talking and laughing, and some smoking cigarettes. The upper classes dressed in black broadcloth, and all wore black felt hats which made them look like Maltese ship-chandlers or touts in the Levant. They held themselves the first of humankind, calling the English "gringos," the Italians "carcamanos," Spaniards "gallegos," a term which they resented, as in Spain the word *gallego* is used to designate a man of all work, and the Brazilians, monkeys (macacos), whilst referring to themselves as the Porteños (men of the port), though at that time there was no harbour in the place. Women, except the higher classes who had travelled and seen that Mecca of the *rastaquouère*, "Paris de Francia," dressed in a loose black skirt with petticoats much starched and laced, wore low-cut shoes and white silk stockings, and minced upon the stones. Over their heads they wore the *manta*, a thick black cashmere shawl which, crossing on the chest, covered deficiencies and served them for protection and disguise. They seldom ventured far from home, except to mass, or to walk three or four together in a row about the squares, when in the evening military bands discoursed the strains of Offenbach or clashed out patriotic music written in general by Italian music-masters.

The house of Juan Garáy, one of the *conquistadores*, still stood, a long low brick or mud adobe edifice, close to the corner of the square, and usually the architecture was half-Moorish, flat-roofed and flanked by towers called *miradores*, all dazzlingly white. A few tall French-built buildings studded the town, breaking the line of long flat roofs, and

looking vulgar and unsuitable both to the people and the place. One of these just at the corner of the largest square was let in furnished suites and called "La Casa Amueblada," and occupied in general either by French or by Hungarian women, who sat in dressing-gowns with their hair most elaborately dressed, at all the balconies. Painted but unashamed they sat at the receipt of custom, which seldom seemed to lack, although their tariff was in general a gold ounce, a coin which in those days was plentiful. In almost every side street, red lamps and doors ajar held by a chain, denoted where a lower class of ladies lived, and not content with this, the bars and cigarette shops all held their houris, and that although the women of the place were keen competitors. So much so that in a town in Entre Rios a Frenchman, having called upon the ruler of the place with a request to start a tolerated house, was answered with an oath: "Yes, start it and be damned, but you are certain to be ruined, for here the women all are amateurs." General society scarcely existed in the modern sense, but followed antique Spanish or semi-Moorish rules, the men at parties congregating into knots, smoking and talking scandal, and the girls seated upon chairs against the wall, whispering in undertones whilst managing their fans. Sometimes a man approached them, and selecting one, led her with compliments point-blank about her "beauteous eyes," her "grace" or what not, to the dance, which was a slow and swinging Spanish waltz danced with much balancing of hips, the arms held out like pump-handles, and during which the woman's head rested upon her partner's shoulder with her eyes closed, as she had been asleep, and smiling rapturously. The ceremony over, she was led slowly to the refreshment-room and ate an ice or drank some lemonade, standing the while a fire of compliments, which as she knew them all by heart and they were fixed as is a liturgy, must have been wearisome, although the age did not seem able to impair their efficacy and personal effect. In the less fashionable circles, they danced the *pericón*

and *el cielito*, quaint, pampas dances with much waving of their handkerchiefs, and breaking now and then into some verses which the unlucky man was held to improvise, though generally he broke down utterly and the song ended in a laugh. The older people sat and drank *mate*, smoking cigarettes of black tobacco made in Brazil, which they lit frequently from a hot coal kept on a chafing-dish, or from a slow match hanging to a chain. On one side all was new, that is in what concerned commercial life, and steamboats and hotels were certainly more comfortable than those of England in the days of which I write. Upon the social side, with the exception of some rich men who had been educated either in Paris or in Bordeaux, or who had travelled, customs survived from Spain, and not from modern Spain, but from the Spain of the pre-revolutionary age. As there was little mixed society, except that of the nymphs of every land that Europe sent as civilizers, we as a general rule remained at Claraz's at night, and either talked or played at billiards, drinking the while *mate* or caña punch, or a decoction which we called "*la boisson Cavantous*," compounded of such simples as white curaçao, gum, gin and bitters, and a little lemon-juice.

Most of the company is dead, the last-named liquid, helped by whisky, having proved too much for them, in spite of struggles almost heroic in their foolishness. Some have been killed by Indians, drowned at sea, knocked on the head in rows, or died in drinking-shops. Long John Arbuthnott, known to us all as "Jar," from the initials of his name, and by the reason of a flowing beard which, mingling with his hair, caused him to look like Jove, sailed in a schooner to the Falkland Islands, and the last seen of him was his tall figure wrapped in a pampa poncho, waving good-bye as she cleared in a gale of wind from Maldonado and dropped into the mist.

Lucien Simmonet, a young Parisian journalist, who gained his living in a mysterious way by writing paragraphs from

Paris in a back street in Buenos Aires, became head secretary to His Majesty Aureille the First, King of Arauco, and his last letter to me, dated from Union Bay in Patagonia, just as his chief and he were starting for their Mecca in the West, has formed his epitaph, for from the wilds of Araucaria, if he returned, that is to me unknown. Dunsmere was lost in those vague regions known as "down about the Straits"; all that remains of him is a blue poncho barred with red, which lay for years upon his father's sofa in his smoking-room, and a whip made of coronilla wood mounted with silver, which when I used to take it up from where it lay, would bring him back to me, and make the tears stand in his father's eyes, who knew intuitively where and with whom my thoughts were straying, whilst I held it in my hand. Others have turned respectable. Simon Uruchi has an *estancia* in the district of Tuyù, is wealthy, a senator I think, and now and then his name appears in *La Tribuna* as having spoken on free-trade, protection, or the inherent right of every man to cheat, or something of the kind. All the Italians have gone home, having made "leetel money," and settled down to smoke Virginia cigars, grow their own wine, and talk of the old days amongst the "Bárbari." My partner is a country squire in Devonshire who hunts and sits upon the bench, is a staunch Protestant and true, keeping his sitting in the chancel manfully and standing up for Church and King, though he believes in neither of them, as far as I can see. John Bland, the "Rengo," has an Indian wife, ten children, and a rancho near Cala in Entre Ríos, wears native clothes (the poncho and the chiripá), has almost lost his English, and, a friend tells me, is happy as a dragon-fly, watching his flocks increase and his own life slip peacefully away. One hung on till last year, and then departed, not the least inclined to go, for life was pleasant to him, his groove just fitted, and in his way he had achieved renown. At Claraz's we called him Treadway, though his name was Cossart; but certain difficulties he had when in the little frontier town called El Bragado, where, as

he said, "I used to sing *basso cantante* in the church choir, and serve the Mass, *vous voyez ça d'ici, mon cher,*" induced him for a time to change his name, although he still remained a stoutish Frenchman, broad-shouldered, and with a profile just below the waist beginning even then to show, though he fought with it manfully and possibly with stays. His dead white face set in a jet-black beard, looked like a pearl in black enamel, and his large beaky nose—"*J'ai un grand diable de nez comme tous les gens intelligents,*" he used to say—gave a fierce look which his intensely black and simple eyes quite truthfully belied. He was perhaps a little truculent, and stood a good deal on his dignity at open doors and crossings, and when he walked the streets and had the wall at his right hand, for nothing in the world would he have given up his right. No, not if his chief hero, Napoleon III, whom he admired but yet called Badinguet, had risen from the dead.

Few people even in Buenos Aires at that day, when life was cheap and every man went armed, cared to contest the matter with him, for he was strong as a West Highland bull, or, as he said, *una lapin*, and moreover his troubles in Bragado had given him a name which it was his chief care to keep alive. Though born in London he was French to the backbone, his family having come from Carpentras; but yet spoke English perfectly, with just a little foreign accent grafted on cockney, which did not in his mouth sound vulgar, but as it were a complement to his appearance, which certainly was French. Thus no one but a Frenchman of his type could, when a woman passed, look at her with a conquering air and say, "Not bad, that little girl, eh? Strange how she smiled at me—but then they all do; one gets no peace because of them—*ah, sacrées femmes!*" He could not have believed himself, but for their self-respect, men of his type and nationality were forced in those days to assume that attitude, as Englishmen of the same time and kind thought it incumbent on them when a horse passed by them on the road, to put their heads a little on one side and mutter critically,

"He seems to me to go a trifle short on the off fore, or perhaps on the near hind." Just as that moment he was working as a diver, which his proportions did not seem to fit him for, but which, as he said, "after my trouble in the camp, a simple matter of an almost necessary homicide, is prudent, and the most fitting occupation for a man who wants to pass unseen." A statement which in itself was logical enough, had he but gone about the streets, lived, slept, and had his being in his diver's dress. But as, his duties over, he dressed himself in the black suit with low-necked shirt and black felt floppy hat, which was the uniform of every one, the reason was not plain. But, be that as it may, he dined at Claraz's, sleeping in what he called "*mon taudis*" in a by-street, and was ready at all times to talk and tell his strange adventures in the provinces, or to play billiards, at which game he easily gave fifty in a hundred to almost any one in town. This talent, joined with great generosity and natural kindness, a somewhat "pawky" humour, and the most perfect feelings of a natural gentleman, made him a favourite with all. Though not weighed down with money, he always had the *Vie Parisienne* sent to him from France, esteeming that thereby he kept himself in touch with what he called "Le Bitume" and "La Haute Bicherie," not that he had nostalgia of the city of the light, thinking that the life in Buenos Aires was the pleasantest the world afforded, as many of us thought; but from a sense of duty, as it were, just as the Englishman pored on the *Licensed Victuallers' Gazette*, reading accounts of prize-fights in the halcyon days of Sayers and the Benicia Boy, and other worthies, long departed to that limbo which presumably they share with jockeys, touts, and sporting noblemen. The "Gentle Shepherds" used to borrow the French papers, and pore on them, especially when they found anything indecent, and then among themselves aver with oaths the French were "an immoral crowd," returning to the pure columns of *Bell's Life* with Saxon innocence. Such differences of ideals, no doubt, are in the very life-blood of a

race; and points of honour, which the "Gentle Shepherds" held in high esteem, were to the Frenchman quite incomprehensible, and each looked on the other with contempt tempered by whisky or by absinthe, according to their kind. Both of them looked down on the Argentines, calling them "niggers" or *des barbares*, whilst they returned in kind, heaping the English up together with the Germans under the name of *gringos*, calling the French *gabachos*, and looking with contempt on both of them, as men who could not ride. Still they jogged on together, misunderstanding one another mutually, as they were joined in holy matrimony.

I left the country thinking never to return, being seen off by many of the society at the quaint little inn, into the whaleboat which in those days took one out to the steamers which lay eight, ten, or twelve miles off, often hull down, in the thick yellow water of the River Plate. After two years, lacking advancement and with the nostalgia of the open plains, the horses and the wild free life, I sailed again, landed in Buenos Aires, and found the place had altered in that time almost as much as European cities alter in an age. No longer whaleboats took one from the ship, nor did a cart drawn by three horses with a Basque riding the near-side animal, or a bullock-wagon with a man seated on the yoke, carry one to the shore where the water shoaling made it unsafe for boats. Steam-launches pitching on the choppy waves like buck-jumpers, in half an hour or so, performed the passage which in the whaleboats often took more than two, and on arriving near the beach, I found a smart tin pier replaced the wooden wharf which had survived apparently from when the conquerors first landed at the city of Good Airs. But once inside the town, although fell progress had already laid its hands on many of the older buildings, sweeping away the house of the old conqueror Garay as if, according to a friend of mine, it had been nothing but a disagreeable mother-in-law, the old life held its sway.

Still at the corners of the streets the hobbled horses stood. Hard hats, except amongst officials, and the like, had made scant progress. Few people carried walking-sticks, but in their hands held plaited raw-hide whips, with silver tops, flat lashes, and a thong to hang them to the wrist. Still women went to church all dressed in black. Basque milk-boys rode their ponies, seated between their cans, dressed half like sailors, half like gauchos, wearing the chiripá and the broad belt fastened with silver coins, with a black jacket and thick boots, a sort of cross between the kind a pilot and a cattle-rider wear. Beggars no longer rode, but with increase of wealth, and of modernity, had multiplied a little, as if to prove that no one has devised a scheme to make the rich man rich, and not involve as its corollary the increasing poverty of our poor brethren in the Lord. Arrived at Claraz's a *changador* carrying my things up from the custom-house, all was unchanged. The owner still sat quietly in his upper room and classified his plants, whilst guests arrived and either at their own sweet will selected rooms, or were inducted into them by an old housekeeper from Biscay who spoke but little Spanish, and that all topsy-turvy, who could not read or write or far less cipher, standing for all that manfully between her master and his guests, and bustling about. The bagmen still disputed as of yore about their conquests, the "Gentle Shepherds" drank and idled through the day, cursing the country, but still loath to leave it, knowing that in a British colony they must work or starve, contingencies they did not care to contemplate, all being gentlemen. In such a place it did not take more than ten minutes to shake down and learn the local news, hear of the revolution up in Entre Rios, the Indian *malón* upon the frontiers, the death of So-and-so, the feats of some one's horse, and to absorb a cocktail, which done, the world appeared to fall again into its last year's rut. "And Cossart? Oh, yes, he has left off his diving," Claraz said, "and keeps a restaurant, makes a good living, and has a mistress called

Emilienne. "Dinner-time brought him to the inn, and it transpired that, being bred a cook, at the first chance he had returned to his profession, and now appeared rather bejewelled, but yet quite the gentleman, to play his game at billiards and incidentally welcome me effusively, and tell me of his altered circumstances and of Emilienne, whom he described with so much detail that I appeared to know her perfectly, both dressed and undressed, her ways, thoughts, habits, with *une tache vermeille* which she had upon her shoulder, her business aptitude, and other details which recited openly put the most hard drinking of the "Gentle Shepherds" to the blush, as their conventions and those of the possessor of *cette bonne brave fille* differed as much as do the stars, both in their glory and their magnitude. The restaurant turned out to be a stuffy, much beflied and dusty little place in which one dined extremely well and cheaply, and heard ten languages spoken all at once and loudly, and where *le chef*, wearing the habit of his craft, went round to every table and talked familiarly to all his guests, hoping their food was to their liking, and Emilienne, dressed in grey beige, her hair *en bandeaux*, presided at a desk, so quiet and businesslike that it appeared she just had left a convent to come and take the post. The guests departed; the *chef*, leading me to the desk, presented me to the fair priestess of *céans*, who bowed *très dignement*, accepted *mes hommages*, and comported herself generally in such a way as to quite justify the choice my friend had made. To the outward eye, the lady seemed one of those sensible commercial French women, who in a situation which an English girl would fill after the fashion of Moll Flagon, or half ashamed, knew how to conquer virtue by her seemly conduct, although she had it not, that is if after all mere virtue can be put beside good humour and real kindliness of heart.

Our talk ran on my friend's advancement, his future prospects, on politics, religion, the next president, the drought, the locusts, Indians, and other subjects which a year

spent in Europe slackens the grasp of, and in all of them Emilienne gave her opinions when asked for them, in such wise manner and so foolishly, that at last the *chef* said to her with the kindly air with which a man speaks to a child, "*Ma belle*, go and see what the *marmitons* are at," and she, patting her bandeaux and smoothing out her skirt, tripped dutifully away. We sat and smoked Brazilian cigarettes, drank lemonade, and watched the fireflies flitting in the trees in the back garden, what time the chef unfolded all his plans. "You see," he said, "that diving business led to nothing"; then, for more emphasis, repeated it in French, "*menait à rien, pas même ça*," and as he spoke he bit his thumb-nail and waved his hand before his face in token of disgust. "*J'avais mes quarante ans*, yes, forty years, so I said, Cossart, *mon ami*, after all, you are a cook, a cook professed, and it is in *les marmites* that your future will be found. I thought of marrying, but then at forty years without a sou, not twenty paper dollars in the bank—a dot—you laugh, at forty years with my black beard becoming grey. I thought of shaving it, but . . . bah! So I went to a lady that I knew, what they call Trotaconventillos, eh, and asked her to get me somebody, not too pretty, not too young, neither too thin nor fat, a good arithmetician and *rangée*, and she, the Lord knows where, procured Emilienne . . . *il faut une femme, mon cher*, that poses you, especially in *ce sale métier* that I follow now." Laughing internally I told him that his lines had fallen not quite in a hard place, and he, loosening the buttons of his waistcoat, rejoined, "Yes, I have ambition, *quand on est chef* it always is like that. My hand, you see, what with the diving and the years I spent out at Bragado minding sheep, had got a little rusty, so I said, *Mon gars*, you take this little restaurant, get to your tools, and then when you have saved a bit, go home and settle down, after a month or two of course in La Ville Lumière; for before I die what I ambition is to be the *chef* at a swell London club, so that at last I shall be known for what I am, and make a name, eh——" Every ambition being

equal, and but measurable by the effort it entails, I cordially agreed, bade him farewell, and in the morning took the steamboat up the Paraná, handed at Diamante, found my tropilla waiting, and galloped to my house.

Two years brought me again to Buenos Aires, on my return to Europe, where I found my friend, still prosperous, his little café changed for a larger one, Emilienne gone "*partie la mâtine, avec un riche brésilien,*" and duly was seen off on board my ship by Cossart, from whom I parted not thinking I should meet him, for his ambition to be *chef* in a good London club seemed to be quite forgotten in his prosperity. Two or three, or perhaps five years had passed, when, lunching at a club in Edinburgh, and having got a mutton-chop, half raw, half burned, I sent (the first and last time in my life) to see the manager. The waiter said that Monsieur Trastour was away, but Monsieur something or another would come and speak to me. He came, and looking up I beheld Cossart, unchanged except that he had shaved his beard, and looked a little like an actor, with his blue stubby chin. Speaking in Spanish, I asked him to meet me at a café in an hour or two, finished my lúnch, and then sat down to smoke and ponder on the strange meeting after so many years. The *chef* appeared true to the tryst, embraced me, patting my shoulder with his great hairy hands, and hugging me. "You see," he said, "this is an *étape* on the way to London, but *ogni strada men' a Roma*—no, no whisky, it is an article of faith I know here in this North—but I will tell you how I came here—yes, a cigar," and he chose a long black oily one, not lighting it, but keeping it stuck in the corner of his mouth. "You see, *mon cher*, I think it was the sedentary life that got upon my nerves. Then, too, that matter of Emilienne—*les femmes, mon ami, ça vous abîme un homme.*" He paused, and looking at him I perceived that he was growing stouter, and no doubt in general *les femmes* did not appeal so much to him as in the days gone by, although a little later in the street he criticised them freely, as an old troop-horse out

at grass is said in story-books to prick his ears at the sound of military music, even when yeomanry pass by. "Travel," he then continued, "is the best cure for all affections of the heart —you smile—well, well, that poor Emilienne was not perhaps so fatal to my peace, but vanity, and we all have it—*n'en doutez pas*. You see, I did not like the chaff about that damned Brazilian and his dollars, although, no doubt, had I been in his place, I should have done the same. Better by far to run about the world, even with such an ignoble *macaque*, than keep the books of a mere *guinguette* such as mine was, eh? Philosophy is in our Gallic blood, not of course the dull Germanic trash about first causes—woman is man's first cause—but, well—one resigns oneself to the inevitable—so I attached myself as cook and secretary to a diplomatist. Half the whole world I travelled with him for two years, going from Buenos Aires up to Corumbá—you know, in Matto Grosso. Ah, yes, I recollect, you told me when you first went there after the Paraguayan war, the alcalde came down to the steamer riding on an ox. Well, not much changed, that Corumbá, when I was there. Nothing to cook, of course, but *charqui dulce* and some *mandioca*, and as there was no business, nothing to write. The people still washing out gold-dust, you recollect?" I nodded, and he seemed to remember his cigar was still unlighted and struck a match upon his thigh, though there were matchboxes upon the table, remarking as he did so, "*usage de la guerre*."

"*Mon cher*, a desolating country, hot as the nether hell and damp—his excellency's boots were mildewed every day, and I, though cook and secretary, cleaned them, out of *désœuvrement*, for they were London boots, and seemed a link with home. Mosquitoes like a thick cloud after rain, and every cursed crawling thing you ever saw, the people, negroes almost to a man, and yet, I liked the place—so did his excellency—it grew upon us both. Nothing on earth to do after the call *de rigueur* on the governor. We lounged about all day in our pyjamas, swung in our hammocks, listening to

our lives. I cooked the breakfast, having a negro girl for *marmiton*, dished it myself and waited on his excellency, who talked to me quite freely, for *entre nous* we were the only Christians in the place. Then he sat down to smoke, and I stood by and talked to him, telling him of all kinds of things and others, to pass the time away. Then came the siesta, and we got upon our horses and rode them down to bathe, going into the river on their backs for fear of the electric eels, the rayas, and some little devils of the deep they call a *pejerrey*. Then out into the forest, a veritable decoration of the opera, with climbing plants like ropes on every tree, monkeys and parrots and butterflies a foot across the wings. Then back to dinner and a stroll about the town, right through the grass-grown plaza, with the adobe palm-thatched houses whitewashed and gleaming in the night—*bon Dieu*, I grow poetical. But still I liked the place, and sometimes, walking down the street I hear the niggers scratching their guitars or playing the marimba, and wish that I were back again. It's stupid, isn't it? But it's stronger than myself—*mais on est philosophe*. With my diplomatist I went from Buenos Aires to Madrid, where I got tired of him, gave him his *congé*, so to speak, and left him in the hands of the worst cook I ever met, a Greek, without an atom either of culinary knowledge, or of dignity. I found myself in London, and in a month or two this billet has turned up, but I shall not stay long in this cold place amongst these people, whose chief pleasure is to talk about the quarrels of their Kirks. Not that I look down on religion; it is a useful scourge enough, and keeps them honest for the fear of hell, and comforts women and all those who never read Voltaire or Rousseau, but for the rest, God's not a bad man, as we would say, out in the River Plate."

So saying the philosopher lit his cigar again, shook hands with me, and went to look after *les marmitons*, who, as he said, were ever on the watch to spoil his plans and break his heart by letting saucepans overboil, entrées grow cold and tough, and bringing down discredit on his head. I watched him

swagger down the street, looking at all the girls he passed, shouldering the men, and humming softly, "Popol," a song in vogue in those days, with its absurd refrain of "*je me nomme Popol,*" and setting forth the adventures of its hero when "*au fond de l'Amérique, pays du Panama, il faisait de la botanique quand p'tite française passa.*"

Six or eight months had passed when, passing that fine specimen of modern architecture, St. Peter's, Eaton Square, on horseback, riding to the Park, a voice called after me in somewhat Gallic Spanish, and turning in the saddle I saw my friend emerging from the church. A wondrous change had come upon him, for he was "*cinglé,*" as he would have called it, in a frock-coat, with a gardenia in his buttonhole. His hat shone shiny as a life-guardsman's helmet, and was cocked at such an angle on his head, it seemed capillary attraction only could keep it in its place. His boots were like the top layer of a pot of jelly, and in his hand he had a silver-mounted cane, the crutch of which was ivory, shaped like a woman's leg. In his left hand he held new gloves of a bright *sang de bœuf*, and on his cheek the barber's powder clung, like sugar on a cake. As a smart wedding was in process I was prepared for anything, to hear he was a millionaire, was married, or had made money on the Stock Exchange. "I come," he said, "from witnessing a marriage ceremony. One of my employers or my clients, all is one, has lost his liberty to-day." As I was still profane to what he meant, he said, "I have at last achieved the summit of my hopes, and there is no one rather than yourself whom I would make the sharer of my joy." Then straddling out his legs, he critically scanned my horse and tried to run his hand down its foreleg, almost receiving a slight kick whilst doing so. "Not a bad horse, *mon cher*, a little sickle-hocked, I think—what, eh, from South America?—then not a word, we have been there ourselves." As I gazed speechless at him, knowing he knew as little about horses as I knew of his mystery, he drew out a cigar from an enormous silver-mounted case, lit it, and puffing out the

smoke, scanning the while the ladies as they left the church, finding no doubt some of them "sickle-hocked" enough, he said, "At last I am the *chef* of a swell London club, and feel I am the right man for the place, for I have now the time to think my menus out; my *marmitons* are good, and," tapping on his head, "something here tells me that I shall succeed and make a name at last." Sending my horse home, I got into a cab and took him to a restaurant, to hear about his luck. As we walked through the grill-room, at the end of which the cooks, dressed all in white, presided at the fire, he whispered *pas de personnalités*. We sat down at a table, and I think I ate a mutton-chop, red and enormous, and flanked by mushrooms and tomatoes, the moral cookery which England loves, and out of which have grown the brains and sinews of the Imperial race, so dear to editors. He watched me, as one might watch a cannibal with horror and amazement, and being without appetite, as often happens, I can well believe, to those of his profession, drank lager beer and crumbled up some bread.

He spoke about his plans and his ambitions, and how one day he should retire, and though he should keep on "my little digging" here in town, should buy some land at Carpentras to plant his cabbages as Diocletian did, because he said the air is good there, and that they grew a little wine, delicious, and as he spoke he blew a kiss at it, puffing his cheeks out like a cannon-ball. What more he might have said the Lord God knows, and himself only, for a portrait-painter came into the place, and, sitting down, began to talk to us. I introduced him as an artist, and the *chef*, bowing, said, "I am an artist, too," then lowering his voice, he added, "*culinaire*."

CALVARY

JUST where the River Plate, split by a hundred islands, forms a sort of delta, a tract of marshy land in Entre Rios, known as the Rincones of the Ibicuy, spreads out flat, cut by a thousand channels, heavily timbered, shut in upon the landward side by a long range of hills of dazzling sand, and buried everywhere in waving masses of tall grass.

Grass, grass, and yet more grass. Grass at all seasons of the year, so that the half-wild horses never know the scarcity of pasture which in the winter makes them lean and rough upon the outside plains. A district shut by its sand-hills and the great river from the outer world. A paradise for horses, cattle, tigers, myriads of birds, for capibaras, nutrias, and for the stray Italians who now and then come from the cities with a rotten boat and miserable, cheap, Belgian gun, to slaughter ducks.

The population, sparse and indolent, a hybrid breed between the Gauchos and the Chanar Indians, who at the conquest retreated into the thickest swamps and islands of the River Plate. But still a country where life flows easily away amongst the cane-brakes, thickets of *espinillo*, *tala* and *ñandubay*, and where from out the *pajonales* the half-wild horses bound like antelopes, shaking their manes, their tails aloft like flags, snorting and frisking in the pride of strength, and lighting up the landscape with their variegated colours like a herd of fallow deer. A land of vegetation so intense as to bedwarf mankind almost as absolutely as we bedwarf ourselves with our machinery in a manufacturing town. Air plants upon the trees; oven-birds' earthen, gourd-like nests hanging from boughs; great wasp nests in the hollows of the trunks; scarlet and rose-pink flamingos fishing in the shallow pools; nutrias floating down the streams, their round

and human-looking heads appearing just awash; and the dark silent channels of the stagnant backwaters, so thickly grown with water weeds that by throwing a few branches on the top a man may cross his horse.

Commerce, that vivifying force, that bond of union between all the basest instincts of the basest of mankind, that touch of lower human nature which makes all the lowest natures of mankind akin, was quite unknown. Cheating was elementary, and rarely did much harm but to the successful cheat; at times a neighbour passed a leaden dollar on a friend, was soon detected, and was branded as a thief; at times a man slaughtered a neighbour's cow, and sold the hide, stole a good horse, or perpetrated some piece of petty villainy, sufficient by its transparent folly to reassure the world that he was quite uncivilised, and not fit by his exertions ever to grow rich.

Adultery and fornication were frequent, and, again, chiefly concerned the principals, as there were no self-instituted censors, eager to carry tales, and to revenge themselves upon the world for their own impotency.

All were apt lassoers, great with the *bolas*, and all rode as they had issued from their mothers' wombs mounted upon a foal, and grown together with him, half horse, half man—quiet and almost blameless centaurs, and as happy as it is possible for men to be who come into the world ready baptised in tears.

So much for man in the Rincones of the Ibicuy, and let us leave him quiet and indolent, fighting occasionally at the *pulperia* for a quart of wine, for jealousy, for politics, or any of the so-called reasons which make men shed each other's blood.

But commerce, holy commerce, thrice blessed nexus which makes the whole world kin, reducing all men to the lowest common multiple; commerce that curses equally both him who buys and him who sells, and not content with catching all men in its ledgers, envies the animals their

happy lives, was on the watch. Throughout the boundaries of the River Plate, from Corrientes to the bounds of Tucuman, San Luis de la Punta to San Nicolás, and to the farthest limits of the stony southern plains, nowhere were horses cheaper than in the close Rincones of the Ibicuy. Three, four, or five, or at the most six dollars, bought the best, especially if but half-tamed, and a convenient curve of the river allowed a steamboat to discharge or to load goods, tied to a tree and moored beside the bank.

Upon a day a steamer duly arrived, whistled, and anchored, and from her, in a canoe, appeared a group of men who landed, and with the assistance of a guide went to the chief *estancia* of the place. The owner, Cruz Cabrera, called also Cruz el Narigudo, came to his door, welcomed them, driving off his dogs, wondered, but still said nothing, as it is not polite to ask a stranger what is the business that brings him to your house. *Mate* went round, and gin served in a square-faced bottle, and drank out of a solitary wine-glass, the stem long snapped in the middle, and spliced by shrinking a piece of green cow-hide round a thin cane, and fastening the cane into a disc of roughly-shaped soft wood. "Three dollars by the cut, and I'll take fifty." "No, four and a half; my horses are the best of the whole district." And so the ignoble farce of bargaining, which from the beginning of the world has been the touchstone of the zero of the human heart, pursued its course.

At last the "higgling of the market"—God-descended phrase—dear to economists and those who in their studies apart from life weave webs in which mankind is caught, decreed that at four dollars the deal was to be made. But at the moment of arrangement one of the strangers saw a fine chestnut colt standing saddled at the door, and claimed him as a "sweetener," and to save talk his master let him go, and then, the money counted over, the buyer, prepared to give a hand to catch the horses, and to lead them singly to the boat. Plunging and snorting, sweating with terror, and half

dead with fear, kicked, cuffed, and pricked with knives, horse after horse was forced aboard, and stood tied to a ring or stanchion, the sweat falling in drops like rain from legs and bellies on the deck. Only the chestnut stood looking uneasily about, and frightened by the struggles and the sound of blows falling upon the backs of those his once companions in the wild gallops through the forest glades, who had been forced aboard.

Then Cruz Cabrera cursed his folly with an oath, and getting for the last time on his back made him turn, passage, plunge, and started and checked him suddenly, then getting off unsaddled him, and gave his halter to a man to lead him to the ship. The horse resisted, terrified at the strange unusual sight, and one of the strangers, raising his iron whip, struck him across the nose, exclaiming with an oath, "I'll show you what it is to make a fuss, you damned four dollars' worth, when once I get you safe aboard the ship." And Cruz Cabrera, gripping his long knife, was grieved, and said much as to the chastity of the stranger's mother, and of his wife, but underneath his breath, not that he feared to cut a *gringo's* throat, but that the dollars kept him quiet, as they have rendered dumb, priests, ministers of state, bishops and merchants, princes and peasants, and have closed the mouths of three parts of mankind, making them silent complices in all the villainies they see and hate, and still dare not denounce, fearing the scourge of poverty, and the smart lash which Don Dinero flourishes over the shoulders of all those who venture even remotely to express their thoughts.

Quickly the Ibicuy melted into the mist, as the wheezy steamer grunted and squattered like a wounded wild duck, down the yellow flood. Inside, the horses, more dead than alive, panted with thirst, and yet were still too timid to approach the water troughs. They slipped and struggled on the deck, fell and plunged up again, and at each fall or plunge, the blows fell on their backs, partly from folly, partly from the satisfaction that some men feel in hurting anything which

fate or Providence has placed without the power of resistance in their hands. Instinct and reason; the hypothetic difference which good weak men use as an anæsthetic when their conscience pricks them for their sins of omission and commission to their four-footed brethren. But a distinction wholly without a difference, and a link in the long chain of fraud and force with which we bind all living things, men, animals, and most of all our reasoning selves, in one crass neutral-tinted slavery. Who that has never put his bistouri upon the soul, and hitherto no vivisectionist (of men or animals) can claim the feat, shall say who suffers most—the biped or the four-footed animal? I know the cant of education the higher organism, and the dogmatics of the so-called scientists which bid so fair to worthily replace those of the theologians, but who shall say if animals, when suddenly removed from all that sanctifies their lives, do not pass agonies far more intense than such endured by those whose education or whose reason—what you will—still leaves them hope?

By the next morning the wheezy, wood-fired steamer was in the roads of Buenos Aires, the exiles of the Ibicuy with coats all starring, flanks tucked up, hanging their heads, no more the lightsome creatures of but yesterday.

Steam launches, pitching like porpoises in the shallow stream, whale-boats manned by Italians girt with red sashes, and with yellow shirts made beautiful with scarlet horse-shoes, and whose eyes glistened like diamonds in their roguish, nut-coloured faces, came alongside the ship. Lighters, after much expenditure of curses and vain reaches with boat-hooks at the paddle-floats, hooked on, and dropped astern. The donkey-engine started with a whirr, giving the unwilling passengers another tremor of alarm, and then the work of lowering them into the flat-bottomed lighters straight began. Kickings and strugglings, and one by one, their coats all matted with the sweat of terror, they were dropped into the boat. One or two slipped from the slings,

and landed with a broken leg, and then a dig with a *facón* ended their troubles, and their bodies floated on the shallow waves, followed by flocks of gulls. Puffing and pitching, the tug dragging the lighter reached the ocean-steamer's side. Again the donkey-engine rattled and whirred, and once again the luckless animals were hoisted up, stowed on the lower deck in rows in semi-darkness, and after a due interval the vessel put to sea.

"Who would not sell a farm and go to sea?" the sailor says, and turns his quid remarking, "Go to sea for pleasure, yes, and to hell for fun." The smell of steam, confinement, the motion of the ship, monotony of days, time marked but by the dinner-bell, a hell to passengers who in their cabins curse the hours, and kill the time with cards, books, drink and flirtation, and yet find every day a week. But to the exiles of the Ibicuy, stricken with terror, too ill to eat, parching and yet afraid to drink, hopeless and fevered, sick at heart, slipping and falling, bruised with each motion of the ship, beaten when restless, and perhaps in some dim way conscious of having left their birthplace, and foreseeing nothing but misery, who shall say what they endured during the passage, in the hot days, the stifling nights, and in the final change to the dark skies and chilling breezes of the north? Happiest those who died without the knowledge of the London streets, and whose bruised carcasses were flung into the sea, their coats matted with sweat and filth, legs swelled, and heads hanging down limply as they trailed the bodies on the decks.

The docks, the dealer's yard, the breaking in to harness, and the sale at Aldridge's, and one by one they were led out to meet no more; as theologians who have blessed man with hell, allow no paradise to beasts. Perhaps because their lives being innocent, they would have filled it up so that no man could enter, for what saint in any calendar could for an instant claim to be admitted if his life were compared to that of the most humble of his four-footed brethren in the Lord?

Docked duly, to show that nature does not know how to make a horse, bitted and broken, the chestnut colt, once Cruz Cabrera's pride, started on cab work, and for a time gave satisfaction to his owner, for, though not fast, he was untiring, and, as his driver said, "yer couldn't kill 'im, 'e was a perfect glutton for 'ard work."

Streets, streets, and yet more streets, endless and sewer-like, stony and wood-paved, suburbs interminable, and joyless squares, gaunt stuccoed crescents, "vales," "groves," "places," a perfect wilderness of bricks, he trotted through them all. Derbies and boat-races, football matches, Hurlingham and the Welsh Harp, Plaistow and Finchley, Harrow-on-the-Hill, the wait at theatres, the nightly crawl up Piccadilly watching for fares, where men and women stop to talk; rain, snow, ice, frost, and the fury of the spring east wind, he knew them all, struggled and shivered, baked, shook with fatigue, and still resisted. But time, that comes upon us and our horses, stealthily creeping like Indians creep upon the war trail without a sign, loosening the sinews of our knees, thickening their wind, and making both of us useless except for worms, began to tell. The chronic cough, the groggy feet, the eye covered with a cloud, caused by a flick inside the blinkers, and the staring coat, soon turned the chestnut, from a cab with indiarubber tyres, celluloid fittings, and a looking-glass upon each side (for fools to see how impossible it is that they can ever have been made after God's image), to a night hack, and then the fall to a fish-hawker's cart was not too long delayed.

Blows and short commons, sores from the collar, and continued overwork, slipping upon the greasy streets, struggling with loads impossible to move, finished the tragedy; and of the joyous colt who but a year or two ago bounded through thickets scarcely brushing off the dew, nothing was left but a gaunt, miserable, lame, wretched beast, a very bag of bones, too thin for dog's meat, and too valueless even to afford the mercy of the knacker's fee. So,

struggling on upon his Via Crucis, Providence at last remembered, and let him fall, and the shaft entering his side, his blood coloured the pavement; his owner, after beating him till he was tired, gave him a farewell kick or two; then he lay still, his eyes open and staring, and white foam exuding from his mouth.

The scent of horse dung filled the fetid air, cabs rattled, and vans jolted on the stones, and the dead horse, bloody and mud-stained, formed, as it were, a sort of island, parting the traffic into separate streams, as it surged onward roaring in the current of the streets.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH

TSCHIFFELY'S RIDE

TSCHIFFELY,* Mancha and Gato. The three names are as indivisible as the three Persons of the Trinity.

They will go down to history in the Argentine with far more certainty than those of many worthy politicians, gold-laced generals, diplomats, and others who have strutted their brief hour upon the stage of the republic.

Tschiffely in his various letters to the Press during his three years' journey from Buenos Aires to New York, reveals his sympathetic personality.

Writing from Washington, on April 26th, 1928, to *La Asociación Militar de Retirados del Ejército y Armada*, Buenos Aires, he signs, "Tschiffely, Mancha y Gato." On other occasions he says, "remembrances and neighs, from the horses."

Tschiffely, a Swiss long settled in the Argentine, a famous horseman, is a man of iron resolution and infinite resource, as his great feat, perhaps the greatest that man and horses have performed in all the history of the world, is there to show.

As to the horses, their deeds speak better for them than any words.

For the last fifty years, it has been the ambition of most stock-breeders in the Argentine to "improve" the native breed of horse, and above all to add a cubit to his stature by taking thought.

They took the thought, and certainly added a cubit (read "hand") to the native horses' height. Nature, however, had her eye upon their work. By crossing with the thoroughbred, the Arab, the Percheron, the Cleveland Bay and other strains, they bred a taller horse, faster, and fitter both for

*I did not know Tschiffely when I wrote this sketch, taking my information from Argentine papers and magazines.

polo and parade. But strange as it may sound, polo is not the only thing for which horses are designed. It soon was found that the half-breed (mestizo) horse, though larger, faster, and stronger; was a soft animal unfit for work with cattle, slow to jump off the mark, clumsy in turning. . . . At this point, I hear my polo players exclaim, "How can a polo pony be called clumsy at turning round?" True that on a well-levelled polo ground, rolled, watered, and treated almost as a lawn, he lumbers round quite readily. But polo players ride for pleasure, their horses are fed and pampered, almost like "Christians." I use the word, not in the religious, but the Spanish sense.

All that can happen to their riders is a collision, a sudden fall or something of the kind. Most polo players die in their beds, with doctors in attendance, and with the Sacraments of Mother Church, after an old age of drinking cocktails in the club, talking of lip-straps, curbs, martingales, bog and blood spavins, splints and other matters of their mystery. The cattleman rides for his daily bread. His horse eats grass, and he himself, as did "Sir Percivell" (in *The Rhyme of Sir Thopas*), sleeps in his hood (read "poncho") and when on the road drinks, if not "water of the well," the coffee-coloured fluid of some "charco" or "arroyo" of the plains. The cattle peon plunges into a sea of wild-eyed longhorns, or light-footed Hereford, where a false touch upon the reins means a wound; a fall means death. He rides swinging his lasso, over the roughest ground, and that upon a horse that perhaps has not tasted food or water since sunrise, and then, work over, has to march behind a troop of cattle, and sleep tied to a stake, upon the Pampa, in an icy winter's night, or in a scorching north wind that shrivels up the grass. Gradually it dawned upon cattlemen that the half-bred was an inferior animal for such work. He was slow to turn, proved a poor weight-carrier, was unsafe when galloping in rough ground, and a cold night or two, without his blanket and his corn, made a poor horse of him indeed.

So they turned back to nature, and procured some horses of the old native stock from El Cacique Liempichun; an Indian chief in Patagonia, and started the Criollo (native) stud book, for the native horse. It was found fourteen-two or fourteen-three was the best height for work, for taller horses, even of pure native stock, were not so fit to stand long days, short commons and hard work.

Then they set about to put their theories into practice and show the world the wonderful endurance of the Criollo horse. Now it was that the famous trio, Tschiffely, Mancha and Gato, came upon the scene.

As soon as the "Asociación Criadores de Criollo," with its stud book, was instituted, long distance rides were undertaken, to show what the Criollo horse could do. Don Abelardo Piovano, on his horse, "Lunarejo Cardal," covered the distance of eight hundred and fifty-seven miles in seventeen days, from Buenos Aires to Tucumán, carrying about thirteen stone.

This was no ride round some great stadium, with grooms always in attendance with water and with corn, rubbers and bandages, and a warm stable every night. The route ran over open plains, sparsely inhabited, where the intrepid pair often slept out alone beneath the stars, the horse tied to a stake-rope cropping the grass, the rider eating such spare provisions as could be carried in his saddle-bags.

The feat was good, in all the circumstances, but not definitive, for it was carried out on the flat plains, in which the horse was born, with little change of climate, and with good grass and water all the way, and corn occasionally.

How, when or wherefore it came into Tschiffely's head to announce his raid from Buenos Aires to New York is to me as unknown as most of the designs of fate.

Immediately the local Babbitry gave tongue. Old babblers and young bletherers rushed into print to show it was impossible. Just as in Salamanca, when the wise reverend fools proved mathematically and theologically that Columbus

was a madman, so did the local wiseacres demonstrate Tschiffely was an ass. No horses, so they said, bred in the plains, almost at sea-level, could cross the Andes, still less endure the Tropics, or bear the constant change of climate and of food upon the road. Indians and bandits would attack the rider; wild beasts destroy the horses; their feet would give out on the stony mountain roads. In fact the project was absurd and would bring ridicule upon the country. Tschiffely took no notice of the armchair riders and quietly went on with his few preparations for the start. They were soon made, and he proceeded to the south, where the most hardy animals are bred, to choose the horses that became national heroes. He selected two, "Mancha," a skewbald, with white legs and face, and streaked all over with white stripes, stocky and with well-made legs and feet, like those of a male mule, as hard as steel. His second choice was "Gato," a yellow dun, for "gato" is a contraction of the word "gateado" (literally, cat-coloured), the favourite colour of the Gauchos of the plains, who always used to choose that colour for hard work. They have a saying, "Gateado, antes muerto que cansado," a dun horse dies before he tires.

Azara, the Spanish naturalist, writing in 1785 (?), says that the great troops of wild horses, known as Baguales, that in his time roamed all over the Pampas, from San Luis to Patagonia, were nearly all either some shade of dun or brown. "Mancha" was fifteen years of age, and "Gato" fourteen, and neither of them had ever eaten corn or worn a shoe.

The horses had just finished a journey of nine hundred miles, taking a troop of cattle from Sarmiento, far below the Welch settlement of Chubut, to Ayacucho in the province of Buenos Aires, in the month of March.

One road and only one was open to him, across the plains to Tucumán, then over the Andes into Bolivia and Peru, from Ecuador to Colombia and through Panama to Nicaragua and on to Mexico.

Once there, Tschiffely knew, all would be easy and the

victory assured, for Mexico presented no essential difficulty with its great open plains, and with a population that adored the horse, almost as much as do the Argentines.

Tschiffely set out from Buenos Aires in April, 1925, riding his Mancha and leading Gato with a pack-saddle carrying his food and clothes. Hardly had he started than he encountered torrential rains that turned the "camps" into a morass. He reached Rosario, with his horses fresh, finishing his first *étape*.

The local know-alls found the horses "extremely weak and thin." This pleased them without doubt, but Dr. Nicholas A. Dasso, the veterinary surgeon, saw them with different eyes. After examination he pronounced both horses "in good condition and able to proceed upon their march." In a letter to the local press he said: "It is astonishing that animals of the appearance of these horses, selected for such a journey, and in such disadvantageous conditions, in regard to food, for neither of them has yet learned to eat corn, not only have adapted themselves to the diversity of climate (Rosario is hotter far than Patagonia) but have improved upon the road."

The next eighty leagues were chiefly heavy sand, the water brackish (such water generally purges horses) and the grasses often poisonous, so that the utmost care had to be taken where the horses fed. They crossed the prairies of Santiago del Estero and of Tucuman, and on the twenty-sixth of June arrived at the Bolivian frontier at Perico del Carmen, in the province of Jujuy, having covered twelve hundred miles (400 leagues).

In Tucuman, the curiosity to see the horses and their rider was immense. Somehow or other Mancha's fame as a buck-jumper ("tenía fama de reservado") had preceded him. The officers of the garrison, much against Tschiffely's will, persuaded him to let a soldier, known as a rider, mount the horse. He clapped the spurs into him ("lo buscó"), and then the man, being, in Tschiffely's words, "a dud at the business,"

after three bucks was thrown into the dirt ("lo basurió"), before the eyes of the whole regiment—not bad work for a grass-fed horse that had just completed more than a thousand miles!

As far as the Bolivian frontier all had been relatively plain sailing for the trio. Although the distance traversed had been great, the horses had been in climates not too widely different from their own. They had not had to swim considerable rivers, and grass and water had been plentiful.

In front of them there lay a Via Crucis.

As they came through the grassy plains, camped underneath the stars by the side of some slow-flowing *arroyo* of the Pampas, Tschiffely, after staking out the horses carefully, would lay down the various pieces of the native saddle ("el recaó"), heat water for his *mate* at a little fire, eat what he had in his saddle-bags and sit smoking, drinking a *mate* or two, and watching the horses eat. When he felt drowsy, he would take a last look at the horses, examine carefully the knot of the stake-rope, look well to the picket-pin, or the bunch of grass if the ground was too hard to drive a pin into, and then lie down with his face in the direction of the way he had to travel at the first streak of dawn.

Leaning upon his elbow he would listen to the mysterious noises of the night, the bark of the Vizcachas, the grunting noise of the burrowing Tuco-tucos, and the shrill neigh of a wild stallion gathering up his mares.

After having taken off his boots, his knife and his revolver ready to his hand, beneath his head, he would draw up his poncho to protect him from the dew. During the night he would rise frequently to make sure the horses were all right. Each time he rose he would look up and mark the constellations as they moved, the Pleiades, Capella and the Southern Cross, with an especial glance at the Tail of Orion, with its three bright stars, the Gauchos used to call "Las Tres Marias." At the false dawn he would awake, shivering and drenched with dew, revive his fire, drink several *mates*,

and see his horses, half-dozing on their stake-ropes, resting a hind leg, and with their coats dripping and shiny with the dew. Then he would saddle up, taking care not to draw the cinch too tightly if it was Mancha that he was to ride, remembering his fame as a born buck-jumper. Putting the pack-saddle on whichever of the horses was to serve that day as cargo bearer ("el carguero"), he would take the halter of the led horse in his right hand, gather up the reins, and mounting lightly without dwelling for an instant on the stirrup, strike into the jog-trot called in the Argentine "el trotecito," that eats the miles up with less fatigue to rider and horse than any other gait.

The difficulties lay in front. Probably at this point Tschiffely taught his horses to eat corn. He had to face the stony Andean roads, high altitudes, bitter mountain winds, snow, ice, and lack of pasture by the way. All these with horses born in the plains of Patagonia, accustomed to but little variations of temperature and perennial good grass.

Writing from La Quiaca, on the Bolivian frontier, on July 29th (1925), Tschiffely says, "The worst part of the road so far was that between Jujuy and La Quiaca." Sometimes his horses had to pass the night with seventeen and eighteen degrees of frost, without food, in the open tied up to a post, with winds that "penetrated to the bones." He says the horses were improving day by day, only he himself had suffered from a poisoned hand, due to a prick from a sharp thorn. His face, from the exposure to the sun and wind, was like "an English pudding." This reference to our national rice (or perhaps tapioca) "pudding" is scarcely worthy of a horseman of his stamp. In spite of all the prophecies that no horse born on the plain could reach La Quiaca, "Here we are," he says, "the horses fatter than when we set out." His own condition seems to have been so bad that everyone in La Quiaca advised him to give up. "But," he says, "little did they know of the affection that I have to my two 'pingos,' the faithful sharers of so many weary leagues of solitude." "No,

sir" (he is writing to Dr. Emilio Solanet, of Buenos Aires, the great horse-breeder), "I will not give up unless either I or my horses die. Good-bye now to the Argentine, regards to all who have accompanied me in their thoughts, with neighs from Mancha and Gato, and their remembrances to all. Yrs. Aimé Tschiffely."

A gallant and tender-hearted letter, that showed a man, brought up in the Swiss mountains, tempered and toughened to the consistency of jerked beef by sun and wind upon the plains, and with a heart of steel.

September saw him in La Paz, the capital of Bolivia, at an altitude of twelve thousand feet. His horses still were in the best of spirits, and he himself had got well of his poisoned hand, in the keen mountain air. The roads had been abominable, snowy at times and always stony and precipitous. From Potosi to Cuzco the mountain pass was fifteen thousand feet in height. His guide's mule, completely petered out, though mountain-bred, accustomed to high altitudes, and man and mule had to be put aboard the first train, for they were completely "knock-out," as Tschiffely says. His horses plodded on, their rider walking occasionally in the worst bits of the road. During the journey in the mountains he had made generally about two-and-twenty miles a day. A mountain mule seldom makes more, upon an average.

The rider had hurt his leg in a fall on the road, and was suffering from malaria, the horses had been badly bitten by the vampire-bats, but otherwise were well.

La Paz turned out *en masse* to see the horses and their intrepid rider, and the local veterinary pronounced both Mancha and El Gateado "quite sound in wind and limb." Mancha was so fresh that he nearly kicked his box to pieces when they arrived in Lima and rested for a week or two. In three days they had come from the region of eternal snows into the hottest of the tropics. The trio had been five months on the road, and of the three the rider had suffered most in health. The next stage, between Lima and Trujillo, was more

terrible than any of the past.

To read Tschiffely's letter from Barranca (Peru), it seems impossible that even such valiant animals as Mancha and Gato could have survived the hardships of the road. The trail ran through the desert of Mata Caballos ("kill horses,") impossible to pass without a guide. No one was willing to risk his life on such a quest, for he was almost certain to "die in the demand," as goes the Spanish phrase. Full eighteen leagues (54 miles) had to be covered, in a sandy desert, before water could be reached, under a temperature of fifty-two degrees Centigrade, or say a hundred and ten Fahrenheit.

Tschiffely saddled up at half-past four and reached his water at half-past six at night. His description of the "étape" shows him with as light a hand upon the pen as on the reins.

"Sand, sand, and sun, lagoons with myriad of gulls, sand, rocks, and still more sand. Not a plant to be seen, no refuge from the sun that there is fire. To compare the region with the Hell of Dante would be inexact, for nature there is dead; the landscape seems unreal. The horses' feet sank deep into the sand, a burning thirst consumed us. When we arrived at Huacho (where there was a well) the horses, although tired, were going well. My head was like an English 'budin' (this is a variant in spelling, not disagreeable to the eye), my face all the colours of the rainbow, with the skin fit to burst."

There he had to stay a little, for his guide and the mule he rode were quite "knock-out," a favourite phrase of his. As everyone at Huacho knew that the next stage was only possible at night, and to attempt it by day was almost certain failure, there was great difficulty to get a guide willing to undertake the task. Besides the risk of wandering from the right path, or perishing from heat, there was the additional danger, in the next two "étapes" of the dry river-courses swelling to broad torrents impossible to cross, by the sudden melting, up in the Andes, of the snow. This entailed the services of someone who knew the fords, for the unusual heat

of the season, extraordinary even in that hell of burning sand, had filled the watercourses a month before the time.

Not finding anyone in Huacho who would affront the perils of the trail, Tschiffely set out on a long tramp of seven leagues, on foot, to a hacienda, where lived a guide who knew the road. He was obliged to go on foot, for on the road there was one of those Andean swinging-rope bridges that no animal could cross. He found a guide, after a day or two, who arrived by a long detour that missed the bridge, riding a mule and leading a horse that carried bread and sardines, with water in four ample flasks. Thirty-two leagues of heavy sand, with neither water nor any food for man or beast, now lay before him. In seventeen hours of "sand and sand and sand" (I quote his letter to *La Nación* of Buenos Aires, Feb. 16, 1926), almost without a halt, he reached a little Indian village called Huarmey. The guide and his two animals were exhausted, but Mancha and El Gateado, when they were unsaddled, rolled in the sand and ate voraciously. Thirty leagues (90 miles) lay between Huarmey and Santa, another Indian town. When he arrived at the Santa river it was in high flood, and he was forced to swim. Riding his Gateado and leading Mancha, he plunged into the stream. Swept down the current he was almost drowned with both his horses. The cowardly guide, who after much persuasion tried the ford, did nothing to assist him, and almost by a miracle they all reached the bank. That day they travelled twenty hours, with only one hour's rest, after the passage of the ford. His horses, as he wrote (to *La Nación*), though tired, were not exhausted, but the guide and his horses were nearly dead. The sandy deserts now were passed, but perils of a different nature still lay before him on the road.

Once more he was obliged to plunge into the Andes, for no road ran along the coast to Panama. So he set off for Quito, having already passed by Cuzco, the other Inca capital, on his Andean journey from Bolivia to Peru. By this time notices of the "Raid" began to appear in every city of

the Americas. The sporting circles of New York and Mexico received reports of Tschiffely's journey from every wireless station on the way. "Mancha" and "Gato" had become household words in every newspaper.

All unknown to himself, Tschiffely was entering on the most arduous and dangerous portion of his ride. The frost and snows of the high Andes, the burning heat of the coastal sands between Lima and Trujillo, the poisonous pasturage in Jujuy, were all as nothing to what he soon was called on to endure. At least in all the countries he had passed through there had been food for man and beast. Scanty at times, but still sufficient to sustain their strength; water, except between Lima and Trujillo, had never failed, and there had been no danger from wild beasts. Once he left Quito, at an altitude of ten thousand feet, straight from the coast, over the roughest mountain roads, he would be obliged to plunge into the forests of some of the hottest tropics of the world. Those forests swarming with vampire-bats, with every kind of noxious insect, full of dangerous snakes, cut by deep streams, the haunt of alligators and electric eels, with every shallow the abode of stinging rays, that if a horse treads on them inflict a wound that causes agony and does not heal for months; peopled by shoals of the voracious little fish, the Piranha, that tears to pieces every living thing that has the smallest open wound upon it, constituted an obstacle difficult and dangerous beyond belief. Their recesses sheltered tigers (jaguars) powerful enough to kill a horse with a blow of their paw and drag his body fifty or a hundred yards. Moreover, little grass grows under the dark trees, and in the rare clearings such pasture as there is is wiry, hard and carries little nourishment. The leaves of a certain palm tree, called pindó, are eaten by the native animals, but it was quite uncertain whether horses accustomed to the sweet grasses of the Patagonian plains would eat them or, having eaten, thrive upon them.

To reach Quito from Piura, on the coast, an arduous

journey lay in front of him, of about three hundred miles. If in Peru and Bolivia the intrepid trio had been objects of interest to all, in Ecuador the enthusiasm reached its height. At the first frontier town the authorities and all the "notables," civil and military alike, turned out to greet "Los fenómenos de las Pampas Argentinas." The country people rivalled the authorities in the warmness of their welcome and their curiosity.

Mancha and Gato, once the frontier of Ecuador was passed, seem to have been almost deified. Deification, even if spontaneous by the adorers, and involuntary on the part of the subjects, has its inconveniences. Tschiffely, with the "pawky" humour that distinguishes both Scots and Swiss alike, writes in a letter to *La Nación* that the attention with which his horses and himself were treated made him lose much time, when he had rather have been resting, in answering questions at every place at which they stopped. He had to tell his adventures to all and sundry for a hundred times.

In fact his progress through such parts of Ecuador as were inhabited reminds one of a parliamentary candidate on an election tour, dragged to and fro by his supporters, always obliged to smile and to repeat the self-same "boniment." Even the horses suffered, for the people gathered round to see them feed, and gaze at them with that fixed and apparently uncomprehending stare natural to the Indians of Ecuador and Bolivia.

The road as far as Alausi, some fifty leagues short of the capital, was only to be described as devilish.

It ran beside the railway line from Guayaquil to Quito and was a series of ups and downs after the fashion of a switchback. The heat was terrible, the track a "razorback" bordered on each side by a sea of mud. At night the temperature fell below freezing-point, and the rain was perpetual.

The troops of mules that, since the Conquest, had plied upon the road carrying all merchandise from the coast to Quito, had made a sort of staircase of the track, leaving great

steps, called "camellones" locally. Sometimes the descents were so precipitous and slippery in the deep mud that Mancha and Gato slid down them seated on their haunches, with their forefeet stretched out in front of them. This feat the mules born in the country all understand and practise, and many of the older books of travel have woodcuts showing them at work.

To Mancha and Gato this was new, but it was wonderful that they at once learned to execute the feat as to the manner born. The wretched halting-places, called by the ancient Inca term of "tambos," were filthy in the extreme, malodorous and full of every flying and crawling insect that made life miserable.

Mules and their drivers, pigs, dogs, asses and chickens, slept promiscuously in the corrals attached to the "tambos." Great care had to be exercised that the horses' forage was not stolen or that they were not kicked by any of the mules. All these inconveniences and the state of the road spun out the journey between the coast and Quito for two months.

The horses reached Quito perfectly well and pulling at their bits, but Tschiffely had suffered greatly in his health from hardships and malaria, bad water and execrable food. He had to stop in Quito for six weeks, most of the time in hospital.

The horses, in a hacienda of a Colonel Stordy, fed on the best of pasture, and waxed fat, getting into such good condition that when Tschiffely, his health restored, mounted them to give an exhibition of their quality, at the request of the authorities of Quito, they jumped about like colts. Gato went at everything with a rush, passing through mudholes in a plunge or two and crossing rotten bridges without looking at them. Mancha, upon the contrary, if he had to pass a doubtful bridge, tried it with his near front foot, looked at it carefully and only ventured on it after putting down his head to bring his ears and eyes and nostrils on a level with the planks. ("Quel destrier aveva l'ingegno a maraviglia.")

The first part of the journey to the Colombian frontier, although an eight months drought had dried up all the pastures, was relatively easy, for there actually were roads.

Through the hot valleys between Pasto and Popayan, unhealthy, mostly composed of forest, where no doubt tigers abounded, and if they camped Tschiffely must have been obliged to light a fire and watch his horses all the night, ready to stand by their heads and quiet them if a tiger's cry were wafted ominously through the woods. From Pasto the route lay through Cali and down the Cauca valley to Medellin, the capital of the State of Antioquia.

All three of the adventurers suffered terribly upon the way. Alternately, sometimes on the same day, they had to climb up into the Andes and endure cold, snow and icy winds, and then descend into the steamy valleys, where the damp heat rendered it hard to breathe, and the perpetual rain rotted the rider's clothes. Writing from Bogotá on the 10th of October, 1926, after eighteen months upon the road, Tschiffely gives an account of all that they endured. He reveals also his undaunted spirit and his sympathetic attitude to the companions of his extraordinary feat.

Eight months of drought, he says, had burned up everything, "and my poor horses used to stand at the pasture gate, waiting for me at sunrise, without having eaten anything. It would be difficult to express what I felt on such occasions, especially when I was saddling up at sunrise. The poor animals looked at me with the eyes of children, and Mancha, always a 'talker' ('charlatán'), neighed, as it were asking me for what I could not give him, perhaps for ten or twelve hours," after an arduous day.

When Medellin was reached Tschiffely received confirmation of what he had already heard in Lima as to the impossibility of travelling by land to Panama.

The Government of Colombia, through the Argentine Legation at Bogotá, sent to inform Tschiffely that the journey was impossible. No roads existed through the virgin forests

that had never yet been trodden by the foot of man. Swamps, lakes and rivers, without bridges, swarming with alligators and with banks so swampy that it would prove impossible, even after crossing, ever to emerge upon hard ground alive, set up a barrier impossible to cross. The forests were quite uninhabited, even by wild Indians. In fact few portions of the globe are more inhospitable or more unknown; few more unhealthy.

Tschiffely went by train and mule-back to Bogotá, only to receive the same report from the Colombian Government. Nothing remained but to embark the horses as far as Panama, but before doing so he obtained a statement from the authorities of the district of the Choco that borders on the Gulf of Darien. In it they said that from personal knowledge of the country any journey from their district into Panama must of necessity result in the death both of the rider and the horses. They alleged once more the lack of roads, the denseness of the virgin woods and the fact that they had remained as unknown as at the creation of the world.

During his journey by mule-back to Bogotá, he left his horses in a fenced pasture ("potrero") where there was abundant grass. A river ran through it, and an Indian boy gave them two baths a day, and twice a day they fed on sugar-cane, unrefined sugar ("panela"), bran, and a grass called "pasto imperial" that has great nutritive power.

Forced to perform the journey from Medellin to Panama in a river steamboat, a mere step in comparison with the fifteen thousand miles from Buenos Aires to New York, he arrived safely at the Canal, and after fifteen days of quarantine was once more ready for the road.

His spirits rose, his horses were in good condition after their long rest, and he knew the country that lay ahead of him would prove but child's play after that he had just passed. Writing to *La Nación*, he says: "Once I have passed the State of Costa Rica, where I am told there are bits of the road that present difficulties, the rest is easy.

"I hope in eight or perhaps nine months to be safely in New York.

"For my part I assure you all that I can do, I shall do. I have no fear of the results and I shall never give up, if it is possible to go forward, and the same applies to both the horses ('pingos'), I feel sure."

The trio crossed the Canal on a lock, not that they would have been afraid to swim it, for Tschiffely says: " 'We' have swum rivers far wider than the Canal."

Just after crossing the Canal the first accident occurred, for up till then neither of the horses had hurt itself, or suffered anything particular except cold, hunger, heat and the attacks of vampire-bats.

Riding along a muddy trail, Mancha stepped on a piece of half buried rusty wire and cut his foreleg deeply, but luckily not near the tendons. The wound was deep and cost them three weeks of delay till it was healed and Mancha ready for the road.

Although he had been told that difficulties awaited him upon the road to San José de Costa Rica, Tschiffely had no idea that they would be so great. The trail from Panama to the little mountain town of David ran through the forests and was deep in mud. Although he took two guides, they lost the track, and wandered helplessly in the vast jungles, all bound together with lianas, into an almost impenetrable mass.

To regain the lost trail they were obliged to open what is known as a "picada" with the "machetes" (bush knives) that in those countries every horseman carries at his saddle bow.

Food for the horses there was none except the leaves of a scrub oak and a dwarf palm-tree.

The horses' shoes came off in the thick mud. Tschiffely says with pride: "However, they could travel well enough without them." The rain never ceased for an instant, so that his clothes all became rotten, even his boots rotted off from

his feet, and he was obliged to tie the soles on to his feet with strips of hide, for, unlike the horses, he could not travel without shoes.

Malaria once more attacked him, and all he had to fight it off with was the native rum, fiery and raw that, when you swallow it, goes like a torchlight procession down the throat.

When he arrived at San José de Costa Rica in a torrential rain after a forced march of eight leagues, a deputation waited on him with an invitation to a banquet. He was wet to the skin, his boots were sandals tied to his feet with strips of hide. After he had seen Mancha and Gato led off in honour, guests of the Legation of the Argentine, his head whirling with the champagne that he was forced to drink, he staggered to his room in the hotel. A bed with sheets, the first he had seen for months, was so inviting that, wet through as he was, without attempting even to remove his fragmentary boots, he threw himself upon it and fell asleep. He says he was exhausted, but that the horses were as fresh as when they had started out from Panama.

His health obliged him to remain for several weeks in Panama. As Nicaragua was in a state bordering on anarchy, a prey to the contending factions, swarming with bandits and disbanded soldiers, and horses were extremely scarce, and of course contraband of war, he was obliged once more to embark his horses a little distance from Puntarenas (Costa Rica) to La Unión in Salvador.

The journey through that small republic was not difficult, but the heat was so intense that it brought out a new attack of the malaria, and in San Salvador (the capital of the republic of El Salvador) he was laid up another fifteen days. His strength exhausted by the hardships of the road and the attacks of fever that he suffered from, he doubted for the first time since he left Buenos Aires of his ultimate success.

However, when he reached Guatemala City, at an altitude of six thousand feet, he soon revived in spirits and in health.

"We" were warmly welcomed by the inhabitants and the Government; society and the learned institutions all joined in honouring "us." The phrase shows the man's character, as well as a whole volume of his "life and miracles." Mancha and Gato without doubt were flattered by the attention of the "cultured institutions," and if they could have spoken would probably have done as well as or better than many orators such institutions endure and suffer under.

Tschiffely now felt certain of success. Mexico was a land where gentlemen and horsemen ("caballero") were synonymous. The country on the whole was not so difficult as any through which he had already passed. His hopes ran high, and in a week or two he thought he would be in the capital (Mexico).

But as the Spanish proverb has it, a hare springs up when you are not expecting her. ("Adonde menos se piensa, salta la liebre.")

Not far from the bridge at the frontier Gato went lame for the first time since leaving Buenos Aires. At Tapachula he could go no farther. Luckily there was a military post of cavalry. The veterinary surgeon found that the smith in Guatemala had driven a nail into the foot. He cut it out at once, but the hot climate and the perpetual moisture of the rainy season inflamed the wound so much that Tschiffely passed three or four nights, so to speak, at the bedside of the sufferer, applying fomentations to the foot. Gato was almost well when some "son of a mother who never yet said No" let loose overnight a strange horse in the stable-yard. Next morning Gato had received so terrible a kick on his near foreleg that he could not lie down. The leg swelled up enormously and everyone told Tschiffely that the best thing that he could do was to shoot Gato and end his misery.

"It was a rude blow and I was overwhelmed with grief, but I would not even entertain the idea of losing the good horse, companion of 'our' perils on the road."

At once he telegraphed to the Argentine Ambassador in

the capital, Señor Roberto Labougle, who replied asking him to send the horse by train to Mexico, where he would be cared for by the best veterinaries.

These delays made him lose a month, but nothing daunted, having procured a guide and bought two horses for him, he once more started out upon the road.

Three or four days' journey convinced him that he would never reach the capital alone, for the road swarmed with bandits and with revolutionaries, words that, as he says, in Mexico have the same meaning.

At the next military post the Commandant refused to let him pass, saying he could not respond for his security if he went on alone.

Hearing the case, the President of the Republic, General Elias Calles, sent out a troop of cavalry to escort Tschiffely on the road.

This was a "gesture," as he says, of "the greatest generosity and sympathy to the Argentine Republic never before accorded to a mere traveller." The truth was that Mexico was all agog to see the "heroes" of the raid.

At every town and hamlet that he passed the inhabitants turned out to greet him, patting and making much of Mancha and doing all that lay within their power to help them on their way.

Even in the humble ranchos of the Indians "they did their best to succour and assist us."

The rains delayed the journey, and the cavalry were not well mounted, so that when they reached Oaxaca, Mancha alone was not exhausted.

The rivers, too, were swollen with the rains and, as there were no bridges, had to be crossed swimming—a dangerous operation, as they swarmed with alligators. As he advanced amidst general rejoicing, encountering a cooler climate day by day, for the interior plateau of the country ("la meseta de Anahuac") stands at an elevation of six thousand feet, the road grew easier.

At Puebla, the people had arranged a festival "to welcome us," but as fate willed it, he had at once to take to bed, for several days prostrated by malaria.

When he reached Mexico his entry was a triumph, and was telegraphed at once to the whole world.

The streets were packed and as he rode along on Mancha women came out upon the balconies and showered flowers upon him.

"My joy was without limit, and my feelings unforgettable, when I saw 'friend Gato' ('el amigo Gato') led up quite fresh, and as sound as when he was a colt," owing to the care he had received from a State veterinary. During his sojourn in the city he received enormous hospitality from all classes of society, the President himself visiting the horses several times and admiring them.

On the 27th of November he set his face towards the frontier of the United States, leaving a host of friends in Mexico, with both his horses fresh and bounding under him. All through Mexico Tschiffely's journey was a triumphal march, for the news of his coming had been telegraphed from Mexico to every town upon the way. His stages were erratic, for at times more than a hundred horsemen turned out to escort him on his way. The smallest hamlet hoisted the Argentine flag, sometimes made out of coloured paper, and the nine hundred miles to New Laredo, the frontier town upon the Rio Grande, was like a street during a carnival, that is to say, when they passed through a town. I, who have ridden the whole distance from San Antonio, Texas, to Mexico, and back again, when all the road was perilous from the attacks of the apaches near the frontier, and of the bandits, nearer Mexico, though I remember every village he passed through, can hardly take in the changed circumstances. Across the frontier the authorities had organized a military pageant in honour "of the brave horseman of the Argentine and his two faithful friends." Tschiffely, mounted on Mancha and holding Gato by his side, took the salute, as the troops with their bands

playing passed before him. It must have been the proudest moment of his life, and have repaid him for all that he had undergone on his fantastic journey of fifteen thousand miles.

Two thousand kilometres still lay between the frontier and his goal, and perils of a sort he had not looked for still awaited him. He had hoped to reach New York in June, but invitations, banquets and interviews rained on him. If he had not protested, escorts of cavalry would have accompanied him all through Texas. In San Antonio he was obliged to stay for fifteen days, the guest of the municipality. The same thing happened in Austin, Houston, Fort Worth and Dallas, and invitations from towns far off his route flowed in upon him. When in Fort Worth a compatriot, Don Gustavo Muñiz Barreto, fitted him out with a complete Gaucho costume, "poncho," and wide Turkish trousers, tucked into high patent-leather boots, with silver trappings for his horse. Public enthusiasm knew no bounds. Mancha, on account of his striking colour, was the idol of "las bellas Yanquis," who flocked to see him every day, patting and petting him. They grew so demonstrative in their affection that Tschiffely had to keep strict guard over Mancha or they would have cut off all his mane and tail to keep as souvenirs.

Mancha, who, as we know, enjoyed "fame as a buck-jumper" ("tenía fama de reservado") became so irritable that it was dangerous to go near him; but Gato, more apathetic, took everything "con apatía," and was concerned entirely with the good things of the stable, which he consumed with great enthusiasm.

Both of them grew as fat as Jeshurun, but there is no recorded instance of their ever having kicked.

Once more the local wiseacres shook their long ears and solemnly announced that no horse in the world could stand more than a day or two upon the treated roads. In spite of that, Mancha and Gato advanced steadily, doing their thirty miles a day, passing by St. Louis, Missouri, Indianapolis and Washington.

As they drew nearer to New York the danger that they ran from the continuous stream of automobiles on the roads was as great as on any portion of his adventurous road. As he rode on, in constant peril from the motor traffic, his mind dwelt always on his goal, and on the joy that he would feel when once again he and his horses arrived safely in Buenos Aires, where, after all their perils and hard work, Gato and Mancha could forget for ever girths, bits and saddles, and the hardships of the road. His dream is fulfilled, and the two faithful companions of his wanderings once more are back again in their own country, after having travelled fifteen thousand miles during their three years raid. Happier than mankind, they have their Trapalanda upon earth, eat the sweet grasses of their native plains, drink the soft, muddy water of some "arroyo," and though they know it not, never again "the cruel spur shall make them weary."

REINCARNATION

ISBILIEH, as the Moors called Seville, had never looked more Moorish than on that day in spring. The scent of azahar hung in the air; from patio and from balcony floated the perfume of albahaca and almoraduz, plants brought to Seville by the Moors from Nabothea and from Irak-el-Hind. The city of the royal line of the Beni-Abbad was as if filled with a reminiscence of its past of sensuality and blood. The mountains of the Axarafe loomed in a violet haze, and seemed so near, you felt that you could touch them with your hand. The far-off sierras above Ronda looked jagged, and as if fortified to serve as ramparts against the invasion of the African from his corresponding sierra in the country of the Angera, across the narrow straits. Over the Giralda came the faint, pink tinge which evening imparts, in Seville, to all the still remaining Moorish work, making the finest specimen of the architecture of the Moors in Spain look as delicate and new as when the builder, he who built at Marákesh and Rabat two other towers of similar design, raised it in honour of the one God, and the great camel-driver who stands beside his throne. Down the great river for which the Christians never found a better name than that left by the Moorish dogs, the yellow tide ran lazily, swaying alike the feluccas with their tall, tapering yards, the white Norwegian fruit schooners, and the sea coffins from the port of London, tramps out of Glasgow, and the steam colliers from the Hartlepools or Newcastle-on-Tyne. The great cathedral in which lies Ferdinand Columbus, the most southern Gothic building in all Europe, built on the site of the chief mosque said to have been as large as that of Córdoba, rose from the Court of Oranges, silent as a vast tomb, and seemed protected from the town by its raised walk, fenced in with marble

pillars and massive iron chains. The Alcázar, and The Tower of Gold, the churches, especially St. John's Beside the Palm, seemed to regret their builders, as, I think, do all the Saracenic buildings throughout Spain. Though ignorant of all the plastic arts, taking their architecture chiefly from the two forms of tent and palm tree, their literature so conceived as to be almost incomprehensible to the peoples of the north, the tribes who came from the Hedjaz, the Yemen, and beyond Hadramut have left their imprint on whatever land they passed. They comprehended that life is first, the chiefest business which man has to do, and so subordinated to it all the rest. Their eyes, their feet, their verse, and their materialistic view of everything have proved indelible wherever they have camped. They and their horses have stamped themselves for ever on the world. Even to-day, their speech remains embedded, like a mosaic, in the vocabulary of Southern Spain, giving the language strength.

Notable things have passed in Seville since Ojeda, before he sailed for the new-found Indies, ran along the beam fixed at a giddy height in the Giralda and threw a tennis-ball over the weather-vane to show the Catholic kings and the assembled crowd the firmness of his head. Since San Fernando drove out the royal house of the Beni-Abbad, and Motamid, the poet king, took sanctuary in Mequinez, as Abd-el-Wahed notes in his veracious history of the times, much has occurred and has been chronicled in blood. In the Alcázar, Pedro el Justiciero loved Maria de Padilla; in it he had made the fish-pond where the degenerate Charles the Second sat a-fishing, whilst his empire slipped out of his hands. The Caloró from Hind, Multán, or from whatever trans-Caucasian or cis-Himalayan province they set out from, ages ago, had come, and spreading over Spain, fixed themselves firmly in the part of Seville called the Triana, after the Emperor Trajan who was born there, as some say, and where to-day they chatter Romany, traffic in horses, tell fortunes, and behave as if the world were a great oyster which they could open with their

tongues, so wheedling and well hung.

So, on the evening of which I write, a Sunday in the month of May, the bull-fight was just over, leaving behind it that mixed air of sensuousness and blood which seems to hover over Seville after each show of bulls, as it may once have hovered, after a show of gladiators, about Italica in the old Roman days.

The fight was done, and all the tourists, after condemning Spanish barbarism, had taken boxes to a man, and come away delighted with the picturesqueness of the show.

Trumpets had sounded, and the horses, all of which had done more service to mankind than any fifty men, and each of whom had as much right, by every law of logic and anatomy, to have a soul, if souls exist, as had the wisest of philosophers, had suffered martyrdom. Hungry and ragged, they had trodden on their entrails, received their wounds without a groan, without a tear, without a murmur, faithful to the end; had borne their riders out of danger, fallen upon the bloody sand at last with quivering tails, and, biting their poor, parched and bleeding tongues, had died just as the martyrs died at Lyons or in Rome, as dumb and brave as they.

In the arena the light-limbed men, snake-like and glittering in their tinselly clothes, had capered nimbly before the bull, placing their banderillas deftly on his neck.

Waiting until he almost touched them, they placed one foot upon his forehead, and stepping lightly across the horns, had executed what is called "el salto de trascuerno." Then leaping with a pole, they had alighted on the other side of him like thistledown, had dived behind the screen, had caught and held the furious beast an instant by the tail, and after having played a thousand antics, running the gamut, known to the intelligent as "volapié," "galleo," "tijerilla," "verónica," and "chatré," escaped as usual with their lives.

The espada had come forward, mumbled his "boniment" in Andaluz, swung his montera round his shoulder towards

the presidential throne, and after sticking his sword, first in the muscles of the neck, from which it sprang into the air, and fell, bloody and twisted, on the sand, taking another from an attendant sprite, butchered his bull at last, amid thunders of applause.

Blood on the sand; the sun reflected back like flame from the white walls; upon the women's faces cascarilla; a fluttering of red and yellow fans; lace veils on glossy hair, looking like new-fallen snow on a black horse's back, all made a picture of the meeting of the east and west to which the water-sellers' voices added, as they called "Agua," in a voice so guttural, it sounded like the screaming of a jay.

A scent of blood and sweat rose from the plaza, and acted like an aphrodisiac on the crowd.

Bold-looking women squeezed each other's hands, and looked ambiguously at one another, as if they were half men. Youths with their hair cut low upon their foreheads, loose, swinging hips, and eyes that met the glance as if they were half girls, pressed one against the other on the seats. Blood, harlotry, sun, gay flowers, and waving palm trees, women with roses stuck behind their ears, mules covered up in harness of red worsted, cigar girls, gipsies, tourists, soldiers and the little villainous-looking urchins, who, though born old, do duty in the south as children, formed a kaleidoscope. The plaza vomited out the crowd, just as the Roman amphitheatre through its vomitorium expelled its crowd of blood-delighting Roman citizens, "Civis Romanus sum," and all the rest of it.

The stiff, dead horses, all were piled into a cart, their legs sticking out, pathetic and grotesque, between the bars. A cart of sand was emptied on the blood, which lay in blackening pools here and there in the plaza, and then the espada, smoking a cigar, emerged like Agag, delicately, and drove off, the focus of all eyes. Girls swarmed in the streets, sailing along with their incomparable walk unrivalled in the world, and in the Calle de la Pasión the women of the life stood

against open, but barred windows, painted and powdered, and with an eye to business as they scanned passing men.

Lovers stood talking from the streets by signs to girls upon the balcony, their mother's presence hidden behind the curtain in the dark, and the space intervening, keeping their virtue safe.

Sometimes a man leaned up against the grating and whispered to his sweetheart through the bars, holding her hand in his. The passers-by affected not to see them, and either stepped into the street or looked with half-averted eyes at the first act in life's great comedy.

In the great palm-tree planted square the salmon-coloured plaster seats were filled with men, who seemed to live there day and night, contributing their quota to the ceaseless national expenditure of talk. On this occasion they discussed, being all "inteligentes," each incident and action of the fight, the old men deprecating modern innovation and sighing for the times and styles of Cucháres, or el Zeño Romero, he who first brought the art of bull-fighting from heaven, as his admirers say. If a girl, rich or poor, a countess from Madrid, or maiden of the Caloró from the Triana, chanced to pass, they criticized her, as a prospective buyer does a horse or as a dealer looks down a slave at Fez. Her eyes, her feet, her air, each detail of her dress, were all passed in review, and if found pleasing, then came the approving, "Blessed be your mother!" with other compliments of a nature to make a singer at a Paris café-concert blush. The recipient took it all as a matter of everyday occurrence, and with a smile or word of thanks, according to her rank, pursued the uneven tenor of her way with heightened colour, and perhaps a little more "meneo" of her hips and swaying of her breasts.

In the Calle Sierpes, the main artery and chief bazaar, roofed with an awning right from end to end, the people swarmed like ants, passing, and then repassing in a stream. Cafés were gorged with clients, all talking of the bull-fight,

cursing the Government, or else disputing of the beauty and the nature of the women of their respective towns. The clubs, with windows of plate glass down to the ground, showed the "haute gomme" lounging in luxury upon their plush-upholstered chairs, stiff in their English clothes, and sweating blood and water in the attempt to look like Englishmen, and to keep up an unconcerned appearance under the public gaze. Girls selling lemonade, horchata, agraz, with the thick, sticky sweetmeats, and the white, flaky pastry flavoured with fennel and angelica, left by the Moors in Spain, went up and down crying their wares, and offering themselves to anyone who wished to venture half a dollar on the chance. The shops were full of all those unconsidered trifles, which in Spain alone can find a market, cheap and abominably nasty, making one think that our manufactories must be kept running with a view to furnish idiots or blind men with things they do not want.

After the gospel comes the sermon; sherry after soup, and when the bloodshed of the day has stirred men's pulses, they drift instinctively towards the dancing-houses, just as a drunkard in the morning turns back again to drink, to give another fillip to the blood. Men streamed to the Burrero, at whose narrow doors sat ancient hags selling stale flowers and cheaply painted match-boxes, pushing and striving in the narrow passage to make their way inside. The temple of the dance was an enormous building, barn-like and dusty, and with its emptiness made manifest by oil-lamps stuck about the walls.

The floor was sanded and in the middle of it, at little wooden tables, seated on rickety cane chairs, was the fine flower of the rascality of Spain, whilst round the walls stood groups of men, who by their dress might have been Chulos or Chalanes, loafers or horse-copers, all with their hair brushed forward on their foreheads and plastered to the head.

All wore tight trousers moulded to the hips, short and

frogged jackets, and all had flat felt hats with a stiff brim, which now and then they ran their fingers round to see if it was straight.

Others were wrapped in tattered cloaks, and mixed with them were herdsmen and some shepherds, with here and there a bull-fighter and here and there a pimp.

In the crank, shaky gallery was a dark box or two, unswept and quite unfurnished, save for a bunch or two of flowers painted upon the plaster, and a poor lithograph of the reigning sovereign, flanking a bull-fighter. One was quite empty, and in the other sat two foreign ladies, come to see life in Seville, who coughed and rubbed their eyes in the blue haze of cigarette smoke, which filled the building, just as the incense purifies a church with its mysterious fumes.

Set in a row across the stage, like flowers in a bed, were six or seven girls. Their faces painted in the fashion of the place, without concealment, just like the ladies whom Velázquez drew, gave them a look of artificiality, which their cheap boots, all trodden down at the heel, and hair dressed high upon the head, with a comb upon the top and a red flower stuck behind the ear, did little to redeem.

Smoking and pinching one another they sat waiting for their turn, exchanging jokes occasionally with their acquaintances in front, and now and then one or the other of them rising from her chair walked to the looking-glasses placed on each side of the stage, and put her hair in order, patting it gently at the side and shaking out her clothes, just as a bird shakes out its feathers after it rolls itself in dust.

On one side of the stage sat the musicians, two at the guitar and two playing small instruments known as "bandurrias"—a cross between the mandolin and a guitar, played with a piece of quill. The women suddenly began to clap their hands in a strange rhythm, monotonous at first, but which at length, like the beating of a tom-tom, makes the blood boil, quiets the audience, stills conversation, and focusses all eyes upon the stage. The strange accompaniment,

with the hands swept across the strings, making a whir as when a turkey drags its wings upon the ground, went on eternally. Then one broke out into a half-wild song, the interval so strange, the time so wavering, and so mixed up the rhythm, that at first hearing it scarcely seems more pleasing than the howling of a wolf, but bit by bit goes to the soul, stirs up the middle marrow of the bones, and leaves all other music ever afterwards tame and unpalatable.

The singing terminated abruptly, as it seemed, for no set reason, and died away in a prolonged high note, and then a girl stood up, encouraged by her fellows with shouts of "Venga Juana," "Vaya salerosa," and a cross-fire of hats thrown on the stage, and interjections from the audience of "Tu sangre" or "Tu enerpo" and the inspiriting clap of hands, which never ceases till the dancer, exhausted, sinks down upon a chair. Amongst the audience, drinking their manzanilla in little tumblers about the thickness of a piece of sugar-cane, eating their boquerones, ground nuts, and salted olives, the fire of criticism never stopped, as everyone in Seville of the lower classes is a keen critic both of dancing-girls and bulls. Of the elder men, a gipsy, though shouting "Salerol" in a perfunctory manner, seemed discontented, and recalled the prowess of a dancer long since dead, by name Aurora, surnamed La Cujiñi, and gave it as his faith that since her time no girl had ever mastered all the mysteries of the dance. The Caloró, who always muster strong at the Burrero, all were upon his side, and seemed inclined to enforce their arguments with their shears, which, as most of them maintain themselves by clipping mules, they carry in their sash.

Then, just as the discussion seemed about to end in a free fight, a girl stepped out to dance. None had remarked her sitting quietly beside the rest; still, she was slightly different in appearance from all the others in the room, both in her air and dress.

A gipsy at first sight, with the full lustrous eyes her people

brought from far Multán, dressed in a somewhat older fashion than the rest, her hair brought low upon her forehead and hanging on her shoulders after the style of 1840, her skirt much flounced, low shoes tied round the ankle, a Chinese shawl across her shoulders, and with a look about her, as she walked to the middle of the stage, as of a mare about to kick. A whisper to the first guitar caused him with a smile to break into a tango, his instrument well "requintado," striking the chords with every finger of his hand at the same instant, as the wild Moorish melody jingled and jarred out and quivered in the air.

She stood a moment motionless, her eyes distending slowly and focussing the attention of the audience on her, and then a sort of shiver seemed to run over her, the feet gently began to scrape along the floor, her naked arms moved slowly with her fingers curiously bent, and meant perhaps to indicate by their position the symbols of the oldest of religions, and, as the gipsies say, she drew the heart of every onlooker into her net of love. Twisting her hips till they seemed ready to disjoint, and writhing like a snake, dragging her skirt up on the stage, she drew herself up to her full height, thrust all her body forward, her hands moved faster, and the short sleeves slipped back exhibiting black tufts of hair under her arms, glued to her skin with sweat. Then she wreathed forwards, backwards, looked at the audience with defiance, took a man's hat from off the stage, placed it upon her head, put both her arms akimbo, swayed to and fro, but still kept writhing as if her veins were full of quicksilver. Little by little the frenzy died away, her eyes grew dimmer, the movements of the body slower, then with a final stamp, and a hoarse guttural cry, she stood a moment quiet, as it is called, "dormida," that is, asleep, looking a very statue of impudicity and lust. The audience sat a moment spellbound, with open mouths like satyrs, and in the box where were the foreign ladies, one had turned pale resting her head upon the other's shoulder, who held her

round the waist. Then with a mighty shout, the applause broke forth, hats rained upon the stage, "Oles" and "Vayas" rent the air, and the old gipsy bounded on the table with a shout, "One God, one Cujiñi"; but in the tumult, La Cujiñi had disappeared, gone from the eyes of Caloró and of Busné, Gipsy and Gentile, and the Bûrrero never saw her more.

Perhaps at witches' sabbaths she still dances, or perhaps in that strange Limbo where the souls of gipsies and their donkeys dree their weird, she writhes and dislocates her hips in the Romalis, or in the Ole, she drags her skirts on the floor, with a faint rustling sound.

Sometimes the curious may see her still, dancing before a Venta in the blurred outline of a Spanish lithograph, her head thrown back, her hair "en catagón," with one foot pointing to a hat to show her power over, and her contempt for, all the sons of man, just as she did upon that evening when she took a brief and fleeting reincarnation to breathe once more the air of Seville, heavy with perfume of spring flowers, mixed with the scent of blood.

AT NAVALCÁN

WE had been riding through the open park-like oak forests that had been sown with corn, now reaped, at the fast jog known as the Castilian pace. It had not rained for months, and the rough trail lay inches deep in dust as white as flour. The greyhounds following us lolled out their tongues like long, red rags, and trotted on resignedly close to the horses' heels. Not a bird stirred in the torrid heat. The air seemed as if heated in a furnace, and a few cattle here and there stood motionless in the dry streams, as if they knew that there was water underneath the surface, although they could not reach it. The bark upon the cork-trees scattered among the oaks seemed bursting. Even the lizards appeared to run across the track as if they did so under protest, scared by our horses' feet.

Nicolás checked his lean, roan mare, and stopping in a long account of his adventures in the Manigua of Cuba, where in days past he had served against Maximo Gomez and Maceo, pointing to a conglomeration of brown, dusty houses that clustered round the tower of a church, a mile or two away, said: "There is Navalcán. They will be dancing in the plaza already, Don Roberto," he said; "let us push on and see them in their old dresses, for in Navalcán they are still Spaniards as God made them in days past. Old Cirilo's daughter was married this morning, and we shall be in time to see the fiesta if we spur a bit."

He settled himself back upon his saddle, and with his face tanned by the tropics and his native sun, his suit of dark grey velveteen, and his short jacket, over which he wore a leather shoulder-belt with a great boss of brass stamped with the arms of the Dukes of Frias, for he was their head game-

keeper, he looked just like the yeoman on the good grey mare that he was riding "a la gineta" who Cervantes has immortalised.

We spurred our horses, passed by the ruined Roman bridge with its high arch spanning the dried-up river, stopped for a moment under a gnarled oak-tree, for Nicolás to point out where he had killed a wolf last winter, and diving down a steep path like the bed of a torrent, entered the outskirts of the old-world town. Men upon donkeys and on mules, with now and then a horseman sitting high on his semi-Moorish saddle, his feet encased in iron shoe stirrups, passed us, all going to the feast. Pigs ran about the streets, as much at home as Peter in his house, as Nicolás observed. Children, ragged, bright-eyed and dirty, stared at the passers-by from the doors of houses, as Kaffir children might stare at a strange white man passing before their kraal.

We clattered up a steep and stony lane, the horses' shoes striking a stream of sparks from the rough stones, and got off at the house of one Cirilo, an ex-alcalde of the town. Short, stout, dressed in black velveteen, a broad black sash wound three or four times about his waist, a stiff and broad-brimmed black felt hat upon his head and alpargatas on his feet, he seemed descended apostolically from Sancho Panza, both in appearance and in speech. Our horses were led by one of Cirilo's sons, just in the way Cervantes describes, when the Knight of the Rueful Figure and his squire arrived at many another such a little town as Navalcán. Assembled in the chief room of the house, adorned with a few pictures of the saints, a curious piece of old embroidery in a black frame, and several trophies of the chase, were all the notabilities. Much did we salute each other, inquiring minutely after the state of health of all our separate families, and being assured that the poor house in which we sat was ours. The mistress of the place and her two tall daughters stood about, talking and bringing wine, lemonade, and cakes of meal and honey, with the same white, flake pastry that the Moors left in Spain

and that is to be seen to-day in every house in Fez and Tetuán.

They stood about, sitting down only occasionally and as if under protest, for in old-world places such as Navalcán, women, all unknown to themselves, have still continued the old Arab custom of never sitting down to eat together with the men. Being strangers in that remote and time-neglected village, we also in a way acted as newspapers. "What of Morocco and the accursed war? Neighbour Remigio has a son there fighting the infidel. He cannot use the pen, so that his father does not know if he is alive or dead." Then with a touch of that materialistic scepticism that is at once the strength and weakness of the race: "The big fish make their harvest out of it, I suppose, for in disturbed rivers fishermen find their gain." Cirilo took off his hat and wiped his forehead, conscious that by the enunciation of a proverb he had clinched the matter for all time. Our hats he had begged us to take off, and placed them on a chair, for a guest's hat in old-world towns in Spain is handled with respect.

The conversation ran a good deal on the price of pigs, of mules, sheep, horses and other matters that men of culture take their delight in talking of the whole world over. All governments were bad, and politics the ruin of a country, yet none of them ever in his life lifted a hand to change a government, but talked of politics for hours. The clergy too were rogues who did no work of any kind, were drones and cumberers of the earth, yet they went religiously to mass, and when the parish priest came round to drink a glass of wine with us, all rose up courteously to do him reverence. A native of Asturias, a province he described as quite a paradise, the priest gave it as his opinion that England was by degrees emancipating herself from the bonds of the heresy that Henry VIII and his accursed concubine, Ana Bolena, had promulgated. I said I thought it might be so, and that when all was said and done Ana Bolena had paid dearly, both for her carnal lapses and her heresy. As one who is

enunciating an eternal verity, Father Camacho rejoined in a grave voice: "Sir, she is burning in hell fire for all eternity." I left it at that, hoping the faggots might be after all made of asbestos and the poor sinner's sufferings mitigated by the intervention of Jehovah's other self, Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

After a round of the strong, harsh, red wine that in those parts is jocularly referred to as "Peleón," that is, the fighter, whether from its effect upon the stomach or the brain is doubtful, washed down with sweet and sticky lemonade, Cirilo said the dancing in the plaza had begun. The ceremony in the church had taken place at eleven in the morning, so that the happy pair were actually joined in holy matrimony, or as the country people say, "married in Latin," and in their new estate were welcoming their friends.

Outside the door the strains of the dulzaina, the Arab pipe the Moors left in Spain, accompanied by the sacramental drum, mixed with the blare of a brass band. The little winding streets were like the beds of torrents, with great live rocks coming to the surface, worn smooth and slippery by the passing feet of mules and horses since Navalcán was Navalcán. Men passed who might have stepped out of past centuries, all in the old Castilian peasant's dress, made of black velveteen, short jackets, open waistcoats and frilled shirts. They wore black broad-brimmed hats over silk handkerchiefs bound round their heads with the ends hanging down like tails. Where the streets were free from rocks the white dust lay so thickly that the feet of the passers-by, all shod with alpargatas, made no more sound than if it had been snow on which they walked. Now and again, above the music of the band, came a wild cry from one of the excited village youths, so like the neighing of a horse it seemed impossible that it was not a stallion calling to a mare.

A mass of country people filled the middle of the square. Only one man, a neighbouring proprietor, was dressed in

modern clothes. The women, for the most part, wore gay-coloured petticoats, giving them a look of humming tops as they moved to and fro. Over their skirts they had a long lace apron, worked in elaborate openwork designs, that in most cases had been generations in their families. Under their short basque jackets their loose white blouses, elaborately worked and frilled, swelled out like pouter pigeons' crops. Their heads were bare, and their thick hair, as black as jet, was parted in the middle, brushed close against their cheeks, and plaited into two long pigtails, hanging down their backs. All wore gold earrings worked in filigree, and round their necks strings of gold beads, heirlooms from older days. Their feet were shod with dark, brown leather shoes, latched on the instep and cut in open patterns by a rustic shoemaker. Though they were peasants they all walked with the incomparable carriage of the women of their race, with the slight motion of the hips that sets the petticoats a-swinging, just as a horse's tail swings very gently to and fro at the Castilian pace.

The dancers formed a long line down the middle of the square, the men and women standing opposite each other. The bride and bridegroom stood in the middle of the line. The bride, tall, handsome, dark and active on her feet as a wild colt, wore a silk skirt almost concealed under the folds of old-fashioned coarse lace that had belonged to her great-grandmother. Upon her head she wore the "Cresta," a high knot of ribbon shaped something like a coxcomb, to show she had never made a slip of any kind. This badge, the people said, was getting rarer than it used to be for brides, a circumstance that they attributed to the decay of morals, that had been going on continuously for the last five hundred years. This bride upheld the ancient purity of Castilian morals in spite of being five-and-twenty years of age. It somehow made one think about the girl who had received the prize of virtue five years running, and in the comic opera remarked: "Oui, cinq fois rosière, c'est joli, mais cristil que c'est dur."

The bridegroom, a tall, swarthy youth, who had already

an anticipatory air of cuckledom about him, between excitement and the wine that he had evidently drunk was streaming down with sweat. Still, when the band, placed just beneath the village cross, struck up a lively Jota he capered nimbly, first with one girl, then with another, snapping his fingers like a pair of castagnettes, with his arms held above his shoulders and waving to and fro. A thick, white dust covered the dancers' old-fashioned dresses, as it were with flour, and falling on the women's black and glossy hair, gave it a look of being powdered, not unbecoming to them.

When the band stopped from sheer exhaustion and the dulzaina players' cheeks were for a spell deflated, great pitchers of rough earthenware full of the heady country wine were handed round among the crowd. They drank, first looking towards the bride, and wishing her long life and many children, then drew the backs of their brown, toil-stained hands across their mouths, tightened their sashes, and after taking one of the black and coarsely made cigars the bridegroom went about offering to everybody from a brown paper parcel, fell to a-dancing, with the cigars behind their ears. Wild goats or antelopes could not have been more active than the youths and maidens; the swing and perseverance of the band were wonderful. The elders stood about in groups, smoking the rank, ill-made cigars that a paternal Government in Spain provides at its own prices to its citizens.

The band ceased suddenly, without a warning, just as a gipsy song ends, on a long-drawn-out note. The men, after their fashion of the kind the whole world over, collected into groups and criticised the girls as they walked to and fro with their arms round each other's waists. Great tables were laid out in the patio of a house, with rows of pitchers filled with wine and round hard rolls upon the spotless tablecloth, making one think of Leonardo's "Last Supper," and hope no Judas would intrude upon the feast. In the house where the happy pair were going to reside their friends and neigh-

bours all had brought their offerings. Jugs, pots, pans, washing-basins, hoes, spades and axes, great skins of wine, salt, sugar, coffee; innumerable bundles of cigars, adzes and planes, saws, gimlets, and almost every article of rural life lay piled upon the floor. A load of wood, sacks of potatoes, with jars of olives and of oil, recalled a wedding such as Theocritus might have celebrated.

Then, entering the house, the bride received us, and all the strangers, who had not come provided with their household offerings, presented five or ten dollars to the bridegroom, who thanked them fluently in such well-chosen language as few dwellers in the north, men of much more education than himself, could hope to compass. He handed all the money to the bride, who put it carefully into a bag she carried by her side and thanked the givers, who once again wished her health and happiness, with many children and long-drawn-out years, with self-possession and the grave air of dignity that comes so naturally to the Castilians. Cirilo hoped that she would imitate her mother, who had thirteen children, and his daughter, smiling at him, rejoined that she would try.

In an inside apartment, that in Spain is called an alcove, without a window and stiflingly hot, was placed the marriage bed. Full five feet from the ground it stood, with mattress upon mattress piled mountains high, a great lace valence worked by the bride herself in antique patterns of men on horseback, tall cypresses, and crosses here and there, swept down and touched the floor. The coverlet was lace, made by the mother of the bride and by her sisters, and the four curtains hanging from the posts were of a curious kind of needlework, exactly like that made by the Moorish women in North Africa. In a dark outhouse, outside the bridal chamber with its four-poster bed, were laid a plank or two, covered with several sheepskins and a rug. This Spartan couch tradition had provided for the bridegroom, who had to occupy it till the last guest retired.

Once more Cirilo took us to his house, and once again regaled us with wine and lemonade, cakes, coffee, and with old-world sweetmeats, made of the kernels of a pine-cone, stewed in honey, into a sticky little slab. We mounted at his door, with all his family holding the stirrups and the reins; wished him farewell with a cascade of thanks, and picked our way through the dark streets, our horses plunging wildly now and then, for from each door the citizens were sending rockets whizzing through the air, and serpents ran along the stones, exploding loudly and shedding a blue glare upon the ground.

Outside the town, when we had got a pull upon our horses, the moon had risen, making the bushes take fantastic shapes, and look like animals, ready to spring upon us. The mountains of the Gredos looked unearthly in the moonlight, the shrill cicalas kept up a continuous singing, and neither Nicolás nor I said anything for a mile or two, till turning round he asked me: "Have you seen anything like that in England, Don Roberto?" To which I answered: "No."

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A MIRACLE

ALL day the diligence from Baza to Granada had ploughed its way through heavy snow. At daylight, as it set out from Baza, the curious little town might just as well have been in Russia as in Spain. Long icicles hung from the heavy, red-tiled eaves of all the houses. The church towers looked like ornaments upon a wedding-cake, and in the plaza the cannons with which the Catholic Kings besieged the place, that are preserved as monuments, were buried almost to their mouths. Outside the town the carts and trains of mules that fill all Spanish roads, as they have done for centuries, and will do, God willing, still for centuries, plodded along, just as they plodded in summer through the dust. Their drivers, muffled to the eyes in their striped blankets, trotted beside them, instead of sitting in their usual fashion, sideways on their backs.

The six apocalyptic horses, after a brief scuffling gallop, subsided to a gentle trot, then to a walk, their feet buried above the fetlocks in the light, powdery snow. The lumbering diligence swayed like a collier in a seaway, lurching to one side, then to another, following a boy who rode in front upon a mule to point out the best places in the road. The sun rose frostily, painting the distant sierra of the Alpujarras pink, but brought no heat with it. Now and then bits of the road, swept bare by the fierce winds, were sheeted thick with ice, so slippery that both the driver and his mate had to cut brushwood to strew upon it before the coach could pass. Occasionally, deep in the snow-laden pine woods, or from the recesses of the sierra, a wolf howled with that wild, marrow-curdling note, once heard never to be forgotten, especially if far from houses and alone. The horses knew it too, pricked up their ears, huddled a little closer to each

other, and broke into a shambling trot for a few yards. At the post-houses in the wretched Alpujarra villages as the tired, sweating team was being changed, the passengers, benumbed and chilled, stamped about on the snow, smoking and drinking aguardiente after their meal of greasy sausages coloured with saffron, potato-soup, and the white flaky pastry that the Moors left in Spain.

Upon the frozen drinking-troughs, broken at one end with an axe to let the horses drink, the women had thrown corn for the chickens, who ate it standing on the ice. Post-house succeeded post-house in the short winter's day, as in a nightmare of cold and misery. At last, just as the setting sun once more threw a faint flush upon the mountains, they reached a village in the hills. With the same satisfaction that a boatload of shipwrecked mariners may feel upon arriving at some wretched fishing village, the inmates of the diligence looked at the flickering light in the dark archway where they had drawn up with a jolt. "Any port in a storm," observed the driver. "Granada is still ten leagues away. Better to stay here and make penitence with Uncle Nicolás Rodriguez than to be frozen or be eaten by the wolves."

In the great kitchen before a fire of olive logs and brush-wood the travellers gradually got their brains and bodies thawed. A huge iron pot swung in the chimney from a chain. Watching it, with their noses almost in the embers, lay several fierce dogs, their bloodshot eyes half open as they watched the travellers file in. All round the stone-floored vaulted room mule-drivers were either sitting on their packs or fast asleep, looking like corpses as they lay with their heads covered in their cloaks. A doorway always open, across the passage by which the diligence had entered the hotel, led to the stables where a long line of horses, mules and donkeys munched their chopped straw and corn.

Men passed to and fro perpetually, either to part their fighting animals, who stood all touching one another, or to buy corn from Uncle Nicolás, which they took in a saddle

blanket to their beasts. The mules and asses all stood saddled; their packs so high and bulky that as you looked down the long line of animals they seemed like islands towering above their backs. The smell of mules and horses, mingling with the odour of the cooking and the clouds of tobacco smoke, produced that incense peculiar to all Spanish wayside inns.

Among the muleteers and other guests, for travellers were always dropping in, two country girls, short, broad and merry-faced, their eyes as black as sloes, their hair as thick and as abundant as a Shetland's pony tail, attended to the cooking or fetched glasses of aguardiente amid the perpetual harshly screamed-out orders of the hostess. As they passed by the men they received a shower of quodlibets that might have disconcerted girls less used to them. They took all smilingly, just as they had taken from their birth hard work, short commons, exposure to the weather, and all that Providence had chosen to dispense.

Dinner was served to the travellers by the diligence at a long wooden table covered with a clean, rough cloth. All up and down the board were set great lumps of home-baked bread, small fluted tumblers, and bottles of red wine, giving the whole an air as of Leonardo da Vinci's picture of the "Last Supper." As they consumed potato-soup, the stew of beef and bacon with cabbage and chick peas, the whole made savoury with bits of high-spiced red sausages, one or two dwellers in the little hamlet dropped in to hear the news: the apothecary, the barber, and the priest, a tall and handsome man of fifty, wearing the "manteo" with the air that only priests of his nationality ever can assume.

Seated around the ample hearth, tongues were soon loosened and experiences exchanged. No one had ever seen so fierce a storm so late in February, except of course one that they all remembered in their youth, when storms in every quarter of the world must have been almost continuous. Uncle Nicolás, the host, had seldom seen the wolves more plentiful. As he said this the others nodded their heads

gravely, being aware, the wind carried off feathers and words before it. One man had lost a colt, another a young cow, and Uncle Nicolás himself three or four goats and a fat pig. The goats he did not care about so much; but the loss of the pig lay near his heart, for it had been cared for like the children of the house, and he had not enjoyed a single sausage, not to speak of bacon or a ham, after all the corn it had consumed. A strong, athletic muleteer, raising himself upon his elbow, after having made a cigarette and spat upon the floor with emphasis, said but a fortnight past upon the road he had encountered three devils straight from hell, as fierce as tigers, all thirsting for his blood. He, with four mules, was on the road from Albuñol to Orgiva. In a deep hollow near a cork wood suddenly they appeared and set on him. "I was alone," he said, "and had my quarterstaff; but then, you know, no blow a man can strike a wolf ever disables it, except it falls on the foreleg. I had no time to tie my mules, and it was lucky, as it proved, I did not do so. The accursed government has rendered gunpowder so dear that my trabuco was unloaded, although I had it with me on my saddle. Jesus! What could I do but whirl my quarterstaff about to keep the fiends at bay.

"Yes, I was frightened. Why deny it? Miles from a house and with night coming on and not a living thing beside me but the four laden mules. Then in my terror I remembered there was one who, if she willed it, could protect me from the wolves. 'Nuestra Señora de la Cabeza,' who has her sanctuary outside Motril, upon La Esplanada, she whom men found upon the beach among the lilies, dark-featured, like ourselves, and most miraculous. So as I fought, the wolves drawing always closer to me, I vowed a candle of the púrest wax to her and swore to go barefooted up the hill to pray for her, if she would succour me.

"She must have heard me, for as I stepped backwards, I was surprised to see my mules, who first had seemed about to gallop off, now all were standing still, with their ears

pricked forward and pawing with their feet. A miracle, I saw it in a trice, and vowed another candle twice as large as the first that I had offered and swore to make the pilgrimage stripped to my shirt and drawers. Slipping between the animals of God, I patted them, and either because La Morenita had whispered in their ears or from the instinct of self-preservation, they turned their heels round towards the wolves. So well they kicked and lashed at them, whinnying a sharp hin-hin, as their hoofs struck those enemies of man, that they all fled, limping and howling, leaving me and the mules alone upon the road.

"I owe my safety, after God, first to La Morenita, who from her mansion in the skies puts out her tongue at every other virgin, as well she may, for which of them has lilies that appear each spring in the same place where she was found, even when plucked up by the roots? Then to my mules, who fought for me at peril of their lives. The case is difficult, so I shall only give one candle to Our Lady of the Head, and as for going to her in my shirt and drawers, that would be hardly decent, as she is a lady. As to bare feet, that matters little, for from my childhood I have gone bare-footed and stones and briars harm me as little as if I were a goat and not a Christian. La Morenita never will find out the difference, for in the skies 'tis ten to one that there is not a pair of scales. What do the saints in glory want with so much wax? Surely there must be *bees* enough in paradise to make them fifty thousand candles, each bigger far than mine."

A laugh went round the other muleteers, that the priest stifled with an uplifted finger. "Peace, heretic," he said. "Oh, man no better than a stealer of the sacrament, would you then cheat our Blessed Lady of Motril, who but so recently has saved your life, out of a miserable pound of wax and put your soul in peril?"

"Pardon me, father," said the muleteer. "I am a poor man with a large family, and so I thought La Morenita might

not have heard of it and that the candle that I promised her might as well go in bread for my own Christianity; but since it seems that I have sinned, God bless her swarthy face, she shall have a donkey load of wax."

The moon had risen, and through the chinks of the rough wooden shutters long beams of silver mingled with the glare from the roaring chimney, and all the company sat gazing into the fire, their garments dried, with the agreeable feeling of being safely harboured after storm. Turning towards a girl whose flimsy, brightly coloured clothes, paint, powder and sham jewellery showed that her calling and election had been determined, at least in this world: "Draw nearer to the fire, my daughter," said the priest, "and warm yourself. Storms and misfortunes, nights like this, and the words of our Blessed Lord Himself, remind us that we are all of the same family." Then going to the door he opened it, letting the moonlight stream into the room and play on the stone floor.

"The night is clear," he said, "the wind is calmed, and the peaks of the sierras look like loaves of sugar. It may be that our Lady of the Lilies, whose holy name has been to-night bandied about rather irreverently, has been with us unseen and stilled the elements." He stood a moment gazing into the night, his figure sharply silhouetted between the moonlight and the fire. Far away in the recess of the woods a wolf howled mournfully.

WAR TO THE KNIFE

IN the year 1808 Napoleon was at the height of his renown. All Europe lay beneath his feet. England and Russia alone were still unconquered; but in due course he hoped to deal with them. Austria, Prussia, Holland, and Italy were provinces of France. Spain, that had for centuries been inaccessible to conquerors, was beaten to her knees. King Joseph, known to the Spaniards by the name of Pepe Botellas, held his court in Madrid, surrounded by a few sycophants and renegades. All patriotism seemed dead. Murat and his Mamelukes kept down the city with an iron hand. Goya was taking notes of everything, crystallising the odious tyranny of the French, in his immortal *Horrors of War*—horrors that have never been surpassed, either in reality or paint.

The country, delivered over to the mercies of the invading troops, was seething with revolt, but wanted someone to stand out and lead. Only the partisan El Empecinado was in arms in Navarre and the Basque provinces. For all that, no Frenchman's life was worth ten minutes' purchase outside cantonments or the camp. The country people cut their throats like sheep with their long knives, and often threw their bodies into their wine-vats to get rid of them. In after days, to say a wine had a French twang was long a jest among the peasantry. Still they went on, stabling their horses in the churches, violating nuns and stealing priceless ornaments from the cathedrals and the monasteries. Spain stirred convulsively under the heel of the detested Gabacho, as the people liked to call the French. That which was to prove her strength, and had done so in ages past, was now her weakness, for the intensely local patriotism had formed each town and village into a community apart, slow to combine with one another. "Mi tierra" meant for them, not

Spain, but every separate village and a few miles around.

At last the turbulent populace of Madrid, irritated past bearing by the Mamelukes who represented to them not the French only, but their hereditary enemies, the Moors, rose in revolt. Armed with their knives alone, they fell upon the Mamelukes in a narrow street, stabbing their horses and butchering the riders when they fell. Two heroic officers of artillery, Velarde and Daoiz, opened fire with a piece of cannon on the French. Their heroism was wasted—that is, if sacrifice is ever wasted—and the revolt was crushed that very afternoon, in what Murat referred to as a "bath of blood." The two young officers were shot, and by their death secured their immortality in Spain. Madrid was stunned, but the news soon was carried to the neighbouring little towns, by men escaping from the massacre.

Out on the Castilian steppes, fifteen or sixteen miles from Madrid, there lies a little town called Móstoles. It lies, almost as one might say, *à fleur d'eau* on the great brown plain. The high-road to Portugal passes down its long main street. Even to-day it has but thirteen hundred citizens. In summer the houses, built of sun-dried bricks covered with plaster, are calcined by the sun. The winter winds, sweeping down from La Sierra de Guadarrama, scourge it pitilessly. For nine months of the year dust covers everything, falling on man and beast, on the few moribund acacias in the plaza, turning all to the colour of a rabbit's back. During the other three it is a slough of mud that wheel-borne traffic and the long strings of donkeys and mules struggle through painfully. Far off the Sierra of Guadalupe and the Gredos are just visible as faint blue lines hardly to be picked out from the clouds, except in certain states of atmosphere. In the short, fierce summer the mirage spreads illusory pools over the surface of the plain, and in the winter mornings, after a sharp frost, the woods along the foothills of the Guadarrama hang upside down upon the sky. Along the road are dotted many other little dusty towns, all with their little plaza, great church,

large enough for larger congregations than they ever hold, their apothecaries with leeches in a glass jar at the door, and fly-blown patent medicines in the window, and barber's shop, that serves as news exchange.

Upon the second of May of the year 1808 news filtered through to Móstoles that there had been a massacre in the capital. The seventeen kilometres of high road could easily be covered on a good horse within two hours, and it is not to be supposed the rider spared the spur.

As it was written, one Andrés Torrejón happened to be Alcalde of the place. An honest countryman of six-and-sixty years of age, in all his life he had never had occasion to show what he was worth. What he was like to the outward visible eye is but a matter of conjecture. Most probably a square-built, round-faced Castilian farmer, his cheeks stubbly with a week's growth of beard—the village barber shore but on a Sunday morning—sparing of speech, yet full of sayings fitted to every accident of life. His dress, that has but little varied, even to-day, knee-breeches of dark cloth, his jacket short, showing a double-breasted flowered waistcoat of a sprigged pattern, his linen dazzlingly white, a black silk handkerchief bound like a turban round his head, the whole surmounted by a hard-brimmed, black felt hat, kept in place underneath his chin by a broad band of silk. His interior grace, his honesty, tenacity of purpose, and his enthusiasm, slow to be excited, but when once moved as irresistible as a landslide after rain, he has left stamped upon Castile. It will endure as long as her vast plains wave green with corn in spring, turn leather-coloured under the fierce sun of summer, and in the winter when the keen frosts burn up all vegetation, stretch out desolate, with but the withered stalks of thistles standing up ghost-like in the waste.

The nerves of all true patriots were on edge. Never since the days of the Saracens had the invader's foot trodden Castilian soil. The news of the last outrage brought all the people out into the plaza before the parish church of the

Ascensión, a mosque, tradition says, in the days Spanish peasants always refer to as "the time of the Moors." All over Spain the people's nerves were twitching, but yet the heavy hand of Murat had deprived them of all spirit of revolt.

It happened, luckily for Andrés Torrejón, that the Ex-Secretary of the Admiralty under Charles IV, Juan Perez Vilamil, was living in the town, having refused to recognise King Joseph and his usurping court. Long did the Alcalde and Vilamil talk over what was the best course to pursue. Then, after praying in the church, the Alcalde called a meeting of his rustic senators. The people thronged outside the council-room, the very room in which to-day is set into the wall the tablet that commemorates what was resolved on that eventful afternoon in May. The peasant councillors sat round the council board, with their Alcalde in the chair. Perez and Gomez, Camacho, Lopez and Galvan, all peasants, their hands furrowed with toil and weather, their shoulders rounded with the plough, their faces tanned to a deep brown by the hard climate of Castile, and their eyes twinkling deeply in their sockets, like the eyes of mariners, of Arabs, and of all those who pass their lives upon illimitable plains, scorched by the wind and sun, all waited for what "Uncle Andrew" had to say.

Rising with due deliberation from his seat, after having taken off his hat and placed it carefully beside him on the table, the Alcalde told of what had happened in Madrid. His actual words are not recorded, only the substance of his speech. As he spoke of the massacre, the shooting down of women and of children in the streets, the execution of the prisoners drawn up opposite a wall, and of the people who had died trampled beneath the horses of the Mameluke infidel, his hearers' hands stole to their sashes, and muttering "Death to the Gabacho," they spat upon the floor. Sitting impassively like figures carved in walnut-wood, the peasant council suffered under Napoleon's heel. Now and again one of them would assent in a half grunt, and anyone who did

not know them might have thought they were unmoved. As they sat with their heads a little sideways, their mouths half open, and their breath coming in short gusts that heaved their chests under their heavy rustic clothes, just as a barge heaves on a canal after a steamer passes, they seemed like animals about to spring upon their prey. The Alcalde recapitulated all their country's wrongs. The cuckold Charles IV a prisoner in France, the queen, a harlot left under the dominion of her lover of the day, the troops unpaid and led by officers who did not know their duty, and worst of all the miserable French puppet king, lording it on the throne of Charles V. "Spain wants a leader, someone to show the way, to gather up the scattered bands of guerrilleros and above all a straight and downright declaration that the country is at war. No one has yet stepped out to lead us, although they slaughter us like flies, scorn us and spit on us; on us Castilians, whose forefathers furnished the famous Spanish infantry that swept through France and Italy like fire. Who would think we were the heirs of those who fought at San Quentin?"

The people of the town pressed round the iron-grated windows of the council-chamber, silent, but gazing on their rustic councillors, strung up with fury, cursing their impolence. At last the speaker, tightening up his sash, wiping the foam and moisture from his lips, took a long breath, and after looking round to Vilamil, who nodded at him, said: "Friends and neighbours, I have served you faithfully for years. The time has come that I must now serve Spain. Therefore I, Andrés Torrejón, duly elected the Alcalde of this town of Móstoles, do declare war against the French."

For a brief moment there was silence, silence so absolute that the breath of the people peering through the gratings of the windows sounded as loudly as when a horse upon a frosty morning pants up an incline. Then, rising to their feet, the conscript peasants surrounded the Alcalde, grasping him by the hand and shouting: "War, war to the knife; death to

the assassins of Madrid." The people in the little plaza caught up the cry of "War, war to the knife. Uncle Andrés has declared war upon the French!"

In the closing darkness of that night of May Andrés Torrejón sat down and penned his memorable pronouncement, the first and last that he was fated to indite, but one that made his name immortal throughout the Spanish-speaking world. "Our country is in peril, Madrid is perishing, the victim of the perfidy of the French. Spaniards, hasten to save her. May 2nd, 1808. El Alcalde de Móstoles." Nothing could have been more simple and direct, with just the touch of the ridiculous that gives sublimity. His next act was to send the son of his old colleague on the council, Simon Hernandez, on a good horse to take his proclamation to the Alcaldes of the neighbouring towns. At once he mounted, and first reaching Navalcarnero, left the fiery cross. Alcorcón, Navalmorál, and Escalona all received the message, and all of them at once declared war on the French. The messenger crossed the Alberche and pushed on westwards, riding without a stop across the plains all through that fateful night in May. In two days riding he reached Badajoz, his horse still fresh, after having covered nearly two hundred miles. The city rose at once, and sent on word to Cáceres. Cáceres passed on the signal and by the end of May all Spain had risen, not like an ordinary country rises in such circumstances, but town by town, village by village, each declared war upon the French.

The rest is history, the coming of the great "Lor Vilanton" as he was called in the Spain of those days, with the English troops, and the long war of the Peninsula. The hour had struck, and from that moment Napoleon's star began to pale, Moscow completed that which Móstoles began, and when the French recrossed the swift Borysthenes, slaughtered like sheep by the pursuing Cossacks, their ruin (after God) they owed to the Alcalde of the little town, sun-dried and wind-scorched, in the Castilian plains.

PROMOTED

AT the sound of the boatswain's whistle the galley-slaves lay on their oars. Turks, Moors and Christian criminals, they formed a curious amalgam of the rascality of Southern Europe and Northern Africa. Stripped to the waist, with their heads shaven closely to the skin, they sat six deep, chained to the bench on which they tugged the ponderous oars. A gangway, raised above the towers, ran the whole distance of the rowing benches, and on it stood the boatswain with a heavy whip that he used unmercifully. If one of the slaves died at the oar, he was at once heaved overboard and the five left had to perform the same work as before, with a man short. In storms, or actions, or a chase after some other vessel, the boatswain ran to and fro, putting bread steeped in wine into their mouths.

When the way that the galley had on her had ceased, she let her anchor go and floated like a nautilus on the quiet waters of the little harbour of Motril, a cable's length from shore.

Her pennant, trailing in the water and the great ensign at the jackstaff on the poop, showed her to be one of the Dorias galleys from Genoa. On board her, under the command of Captain Don Julian Ramirez, straight from the Flemish wars, came a detachment of one of the famous "tercios," to fight against the Moriscoes, whom persecution had driven to revolt. All the hill villages of the Alpujarras around Granada were held for the new sultan who, once a Christian under the name of Fernando de Valor, had gone back to the simpler faith of Allah and his prophet and butchered every Spaniard he could find. Don John of Austria himself was in command against them. Boats left the galley, full of men, their horses swimming after them,

led by a rope. They formed upon the beach and let their horses roll in the sand before they saddled up. Then, when the last boatload had got ashore, the detachment of some fifty men slowly set out towards Motril leading their horses, who were stiff and cramped after ten days at sea from Genoa. Their captain led his own horse as he walked at the head of his company.

They crossed the beach close to the spot where, in a bed of lilies, was found the sculptured image of Our Lady of the Head, revered throughout the district for many a miracle it has wrought, although the unbelievers shoot out their lips and say, it once adorned the prow of some wrecked ship. When they arrived at the old town the wild inhabitants swarmed out to welcome them, the children, swarthy and ragged as the Moors, shrill-voiced and critical, and in no wise awed by the grim warriors, upon whom they freely passed remarks not always complimentary. As they marched slowly through the sandy streets, towards the plaza where they were to camp, the population crowded to their doors, and from the iron-grated windows peered women dressed in the formal costume of the time, but much behind the fashion of Madrid. Though nothing in the world was so detested in their eyes as a Moor, still the close intercourse between the ever-jarring races had endued them with so much of the Arab character that many of them drew their shawls across their mouths when the troopers stared too closely at them.

All eyes were fixed upon the captain, who, thin and war-scarred, one hand upon the hilt of his long Milan rapier, gravely saluted the Alcalde as he gave his horse to a man to hold, who stepped out from the ranks. The men in their trunk hose, buff jerkins, tall russet boots and bright steel bassinets, were low in stature as a rule, but active and well knit, swarthy and with the look about them that only life exposed to constant danger ever gives. Some carried cross-bows of steel fitted with little windlasses, for no living man

was strong enough to bend them with the naked hand. Others bore harquebuses that still were fired with the pyrites wheel, for flint-locks were but just coming into use. All carried pikes and swords of the same pattern as their captain's, though of a common make, heavy but serviceable. Broken to war for years in Holland, the soldiers, who had been accustomed to give or take but little quarter in their campaigns against the northern heretics, were just the kind of men to deal with their hereditary foes, the Moors. The people of Motril poured into their willing ears tales of the cruelties committed by the revolted Moriscoes on the Christian villagers, that set their blood on fire. Their captain scarcely could prevail on them to rest, before the horses were fit to take the road.

On the third morning, after a mass held in their camp and an unheeded exhortation not to spare the Moorish dogs, they filed out of Motril. Their chaplain, Fray Juan de Dios, a tall, pale-faced Franciscan friar, strong and athletic, with his habit tucked up in his belt, marched with the crossbowmen on foot, carrying a crucifix. Captain Ramirez and his lieutenant, Hugo Mondragon, said that the friar was wasted, and that so fine and tall a man ought to have been a soldier. They often asked him, half in earnest, half jestingly, to change his habit for a uniform, promising if he did so to promote him to the rank of "alférez" at the first opportunity. To all these jokes the friar used to reply that he could do better service in his own regiment and that the Lord would not forget to promote him if He should see fit.

At daybreak Captain Ramirez left the town, the ragged population turning out to see him on the road, and then returning to its usual avocation of consuming time, as time was what it had the most of to consume. A fresh, soft breeze blew off the sea, wafting a light mist towards the ochre-coloured hills, around whose tops it hung in wreaths, but without shrouding them from sight as in the north. The company crossed the half-dried-up river, that only ran in channels here and there, the horses whinnied, glad to be

freed from the confinement of the ship and danced and passaged sideways when the water splashed against their legs. Gradually Motril sank out of sight, as they wound through the sugar-fields that circle round the town. When the church tower had disappeared and all the miserable reed-built, straw-thatched huts were passed, Captain Ramirez threw out skirmishers on each side of the troop and sent two mounted men in front. Each crag and copse upon the way might hold an enemy and all the farms upon the road were quite deserted, the cattle driven to the shelter of the walls of Adra, Salobreña, or Motril and the crops left standing in the fields. As they ascended the rude track towards the Alpujarras, bearing towards the east a little, they passed by Albuñol, its white and Moorish-looking houses refracting back the morning sun so as almost to blind the soldiers, long accustomed to the low skies of the Low Countries. The soldiers muttered to each other: "Spain once more; praise to the Lord, she never changes, and though bread, meat and all the rest may lack, we have the sun to warm us. Long live the Sun!" When the track passed Polopos, they entered the great cork woods of the lower foothills of the sierras, and looking to the vast expanse of country descried Almuñecar in the distance and Salobreña on its rocky eminence. Torrox, still held by the enemies of God, nestled against the very breast of the wild hills, encircled by its walls. Its slender mosque tower was just visible, and near the walls the tents of the besiegers, sent by Don John of Austria to reduce the place, clustered like toadstools round the trunk of a dead tree.

Now and again they passed dead bodies half eaten by the wolves, and halted for Fray Juan to say a prayer over them, while the men cursed the spawn of Mahomet. Lanjarron lay half in ruins, and from the cellars crept starved wretches who had been too terrified to venture out to make their way towards the coast. From them the captain learned that the first strong place held by the rebels was but a half-day's march away among the hills. The people said it was im-

pregnable without siege cannon, perched as it was, like an eagle's eyrie on a crag, with a deep chasm in the rock before the only gate. Night was approaching, and in an orange garden where half the trees had been cut down they made their camp. So wild and desolate the landscape looked in the fast failing light, it seemed they and their horses were the only living things in all the world. Far off, the sea shone like a sheet of frosted silver, without a sail to give relief to its immensity. The red earth glowed like a blazing furnace under the last rays of the setting sun. Great bands of scarlet, fading into magenta and dissolving into a faint purple, barred the sky. Lakes seemed to float above the mountain-tops as in a mirage; lakes so translucent and diaphanous that, as they melted into faintest saffron and disappeared to form again in fine gradations of violet, black, brown, aquamarine and palest opal, it seemed as if the atmosphere challenged the spectrum to follow all its shades.

The sentinels drowsed at their posts, blowing their match occasionally to keep it burning. When it flared for an instant, its bluish gleam lit up the bivouac and disclosed the groups of soldiers, sleeping with their feet towards the fire, and underneath the orange-trees the horses picketed, munching their barley, or resting a hind-leg, with one ear pointing forward and the other backward, to catch the slightest sound. Of all the camp, only the friar was wakeful, telling his beads, and rising now and then to pray upon his knees. The officers, who slept but intermittently, smiled at each other as they looked at him, and muttered: "Not only he, but all the friars in Spain are praying for us." The false dawn saw the camp astir, with the dew dropping off the orange-trees, matting the horses' manes and tails and running from the barrels of the harquebuses. Before the morning star had fairly disappeared, the men had cleaned their arms, looked to the crossbow strings, fed their horses and after a brief prayer from the friar commenced a long ascent over a steep staircase of rock, the horses scrambling like cats to keep

their foothold, and striking fire out of the stones. Soon peasants driving their flocks before them appeared upon the road, with tales of all the horrors of the revolt, for both sides fought like famished wolves, holding their lives as nothing, if they might only kill an enemy. On every side the smoke of burning villages filled the air, and in the distance shots resounded through the hills.

Spurring along the road and looking anxiously from side to side among the bushes, a courier from Don John of Austria's headquarters at Isnalloz rode up to them. Victory was certain, but several rebel chieftains still held out and the campaign was bound to last for months. A Turk, one Mamet Ali, held the strong little fortress of Hisnr-el-Birk, only a league away, with about five-and-twenty men. From it he sallied out at intervals to raid the district, slaughtering the villagers like sheep, and violating all the women and girls. The courier did not know the Spanish name of the stronghold, but said it did not matter, for hereabouts we all speak Arabic. He tightened up his girths, crossed himself, mounted and moved off, calling out as he went: "Mamet Ali is a devil and the son of a devil; look out for him." Then, spurring on, he vanished in a cloud of dust, his horse's footfalls echoing back for a long time in the still air.

Captain Ramirez called a halt, dismounted all his men, who fed their horses and ate a scanty meal. Then he sent out two scouts. On their return they said the castle was but a mile or two away. The bridge across the chasm had been cut. The trestles still remained, and in the bushes they had found some planks they thought might stretch across. The captain saddled up at once, and dashing forward, drove the Moors into the fort. No time was to be lost, for bolts and arrows whistled among them, wounding several of the men. The captain's first care was to send the horses to the rear, out of the missiles' way. Then he called out for volunteers. All answered his demand, and carrying brushwood cut down with their swords, to shelter them, they bridged the chasm,

losing a man or two slain by the stones the Moors cast down on them. The Turk stood on the walls directing everything. No shot could touch him. The soldiers said he was in league with Satan, or had a hundred lives. When all was ready and the fire of the harquebuses and the crossbowmen kept back the enemy from the bridge, there was a pause. The hardy soldiers, who had faced perils all their lives in the Italian and Dutch wars, in Mexico and in Peru, stood hesitating, for it seemed certain death to venture on the planks exposed to fire and to a rain of stones.

The captain was tightening up his belt to lead his men to victory or to death, when he was put aside, firmly but gently. His eyes ablaze, his face pale as a corpse, his habit tucked up to his belt, carrying a sword in one hand and in the other holding a crucifix, Fray Juan de Dios rushed across the bridge amid a shower of stones. The soldiers, yelling "Santiago, close up Spain; death to the Moorish dogs!" rushed after him and battered down the door. For half an hour the fight raged furiously without a thought of quarter, the soldiers striking down the Moors, who fought to their last breath, stabbing their enemies upon the ground in their death agony. Mamet Ali, still without a wound, fought stubbornly up the stone stairway to the roof, then bounding on the parapet, hurled a last curse against the Nazarenes and sprang into the abyss. Down in the courtyard, after his losses had been counted, Ramirez wiped his sword upon the cloak of a dead Moor. "The dogs fought well," he said to his lieutenant. "Where is the friar? for after God we owe the victory to him. This time he shall be made alférez if I have to go to Rome to get the Holy Father to absolve him from his vows. I will promote him this time, no matter what he says." His second in command looked at him sadly, saying: "It is in vain. He was promoted half an hour ago in his own regiment. . . . Come and see where he lies."

Ten paces from the gate he lay, his eyes wide open, the fire of combat gone from them, and a contented smile upon

his face. A little stream of blood, already nearly dried, had trickled from his lips, as a great rock crushed in his chest. His sword, broken and bloody, was by his side. With his last breath he had grasped the crucifix in his right hand.

FOR ART'S SAKE

BROWN, severe and wall-girt, the stubborn city still held out.

Its proud traditions made it impossible for Zaragoza to capitulate without a siege. As in the days of Soult, when the heroic maid, the *artillera*, as her countrymen call her with pride, when Palafox held up the blood and orange banner in which float the lions and the castles of Castille, the city answered shot for shot.

Fire spurted from the Moorish walls, built by the Beni Hud, who reigned in Zaragoza, when still Sohail poured its protecting rays upon the land. The bluish wreaths of smoke curled on the Ebro, running along the water and enveloping the Coso as if in a mist.

A dropping rifle-fire crackled out from the ramparts, and above the castle the red flag of the Intransigent-Republic shivered and fluttered in the breeze.

The Torre Nueva sprang from the middle of the town, just as a palm tree rises from the desert sands. It was built at the time when Moorish artisans, infidel dogs who yet preserved the secrets of the East amongst the Christians (may dogs defile their graves), had spent their science and their love upon it.

Octagonal, and looking as if blown into the air by the magician's art, it leaned a little to one side, and as the admiring inhabitants averred, drawing their right hands open over their left arms, laughed at its rival of Bologna and at every other tower on earth.

No finer specimen of the art known as Mudejar existed in all Spain. Galleries cut it here and there; and ajimeces, the little horseshoe windows divided by a marble pillar, loved of the Moors, which tradition says they took from the rude

openings in their tents of camel's hair, gave light to the inside. Stages of inclined planes led to the top, so gradual in their ascent that once a Queen of Spain had ridden up them to admire the view over the Sierras upon her palfrey, or her donkey, for all is one when treating of a queen, who of a certainty ennobles the animal she deigns to ride upon. Bold ajaracas, the patterns proper to the style of architecture, stood up in high relief upon its sides, and near the balustrade upon the top a band of bluish tiles relieved the brownness of the brickwork and sparkled in the sun. Sieges and time and storms, rain, wind and snow had spared it; even the neglect of centuries had left it unimpaired—erect and elegant as a young Arab maiden carrying water from the well. Architects said that it inclined a little more each year, and talked about subsidences; but they were foreigners, unused to the things of Spain, and no one marked them; and the tower continued to be loved and prized and to fall into disrepair. On this occasion riflemen lined the galleries, pouring a hot fire upon the attacking forces of the Government.

Encamped upon the heights above Torero, the Governmental army held the banks of the canal that gives an air of Holland to that part of the adust and calcined landscape of Aragon.

The General's quarters overlooked the town, and from them he could see Santa Engracia, in whose crypt repose the bodies of the martyrs in an atmosphere of ice, standing alone upon its little plaza, fringed by a belt of stunted and ill-grown acacia trees. The great cathedral, with its domes, in which the shrine of the tutelary Virgin of the Pilar, the Pilarica of the country folk, glittering with jewels and with silver plate, is venerated as befits the abiding place on earth of the miraculous figure sent direct from heaven, towered into the sky.

Churches and towers and convents, old castellated houses with their overhanging eaves and coats-of-arms upon the doors, jewels of architecture, memorials of the past, formed

as it were a jungle wrought in a warm brown stone. Beyond the city towered the mountains that hang over Huesca of the Bell. Through them the Aragon has cut its roaring passages towards Sobrarbe to the south. Northwards they circle Jaca, the virgin little city that beat off the Moors a thousand years ago, and still once every year commemorates her prowess outside the walls, where Moors and Christians fight again the unequal contest, into which St. James, mounted upon his milk-white charger, had plunged and thrown the weight of his right arm. The light was so intense and African that on the mountain sides each rock was visible, outlined as in a cámara lúcida, and as the artillery played upon the tower the effects of every salvo showed up distinctly on the crumbling walls. All round the Government's encampment stood groups of peasantry who had been impressed together with their animals to bring provisions. Wrapped in their brown and white checked blankets, dressed in tight knee-breeches, short jackets, and grey stockings, and shod with alpargatas—the canvas, hemp-soled sandals that are fastened round the ankles with blue cords—they stood and smoked, stolid as Moors, and as unfathomable as the deep mysterious corries of their hills.

When the artillery thundered and the breaches in the walls grew daily more apparent and more ominous, the country people merely smiled, for they were sure the Pilarica would preserve the city; and even if she did not, all Governments, republican or clerical, were the same to them.

All their ambition was to live quietly, each in his village, which to him was the hub round which the world revolved.

So one would say, as they stood watching the progress of the siege: "Chiquio, the sciences advance a bestiality, the Government in the Madrids can hear each cannon-shot. The sound goes on those wires that stretch upon the posts we tie our donkeys to when we come into town. . . ."

Little by little the forces of the Government advanced, crossing the Ebro at the bridge which spans it in the middle

of the great double promenade called the Coso, and by degrees drew near the walls.

The stubborn guerrilleros in the town contested every point of vantage, fighting like wolves, throwing themselves with knives and scythes stuck upright on long poles upon the troops.

So fought their grandfathers against the French, and so Strabo describes their ancestors, adding: "The Spaniard is a taciturn, dark man, usually dressed in black; he fights with a short sword, and always tries to come to close grips with our legionaries."

As happens in all civil wars, when brother finds himself opposed to brother, the strife was mortal, and he who fell received no mercy from the conqueror.

The riflemen upon the Torre Nueva poured in their fire, especially upon the Regiment of Pavia, whose Colonel, Don Luis Montoro, on several occasions gave orders to the artillerymen at any cost to spare the tower.

Officer after officer fell by his side, and soldiers in the ranks cursed audibly, covering the saints with filth, as runs the phrase in Spanish, and wondering why their Colonel did not dislodge the riflemen who made such havoc in their files. Discipline told at last, and all the Intransigents were forced inside the walls, leaving the moat with but a single plank to cross it by which to reach the town. Upon the plank the fire was concentrated from the walls, and the besiegers stood for a space appalled, sheltering themselves as best they could behind the trees and inequalities of the ground.

Montoro called for volunteers, and one by one three grizzled soldiers, who had grown grey in wars against the Moors, stepped forward and fell pierced with a dozen wounds.

After a pause there was a movement in the ranks, and with a sword in his right hand and in his left the colours of Castille, his brown stuff gown tucked up showing his hairy knees knotted and muscular, out stepped a friar, and strode towards

the plank, Taking the sword between his teeth he crossed himself, and beckoning on the men, rushed forward in the thickest of the fire.

He crossed in safety, and then the regiment, with a hoarse shout of "Long live God," dashed on behind him, some carrying planks and others crossing upon bales of straw, which they had thrown into the moat. Under the walls they formed and rushed into the town, only to find each house a fortress and each street blocked by a barricade. From every window dark faces peered, and a continual fusillade was poured upon them, whilst from the house-tops the women showered down tiles.

Smoke filled the narrow streets, and from dark archways groups of desperate men came rushing, armed with knives, only to fall in heaps before the troops who, with fixed bayonets, steadily pushed on.

A shift of wind cleared off the smoke and showed the crimson flag still floating from the citadel, ragged and torn by shots. Beyond the town appeared the mountains peeping out shyly through the smoke, as if they looked down on the follies of mankind with a contemptuous air.

Dead bodies strewed the streets, in attitudes half tragical, half ludicrous, some looking like mere bundles of old clothes, and some distorted with a stiff arm still pointing to the sky.

Right in the middle of a little square the friar lay shot through the forehead, his sword beside him, and with the flag clasped tightly to his breast.

His great brown eyes stared upwards, and as the soldiers passed him some of them crossed themselves, and an old sergeant spoke his epitaph: "This friar," he said, "was not of those fit only for the Lord; he would have made a soldier, and a good one; may God have pardoned him."

Driven into the middle plaza of the town, the Intransigents fought till the last, selling their lives for more than they were worth, and dying silently.

The citadel was taken with a rush and the red flag hauled down.

Bugles rang out from the other angle of the plaza; the General and his staff rode slowly forward to meet the Regiment of Pavia as it debouched into the square.

Colonel Montoro halted, and then, saluting, advanced towards his chief. His General, turning to him, angrily exclaimed: "Tell me, why did you let those fellows in the tower do so much damage, when a few shots from the field guns would have soon finished them?"

Montoro hesitated, and recovering his sword once more saluted as his horse fretted on the curb, snorting and sidling from the dead bodies that were strewed upon the ground.

"My General," he said, "not for all Spain and half the Indies would I have trained the cannon on the tower; it is Mudejar of the purest architecture."

His General smiled at him a little grimly, and saying: "Well, after all, this is no time to ask accounts from any man," touched his horse with the spur and, followed by his staff, disappeared into the town.

A SAINT

THE days of saints are past. We never see them in these latter times. Our eyes are just as slow to mark them as were the eyes of those who slew and tortured them in days gone by, giving them thus the chance of immortality and of a place apart, in calendars.

I knew one though, that is, if stripes and prisons oft, the scorn of men, a life of poverty and a pure nature, with a soul afire at all injustice, constitute a saint. As many of the breed were born in most unlikely places and surroundings, so was the one I knew, for I feel certain that he was a saint in truth, in deed, and thought and life, although no church has canonised his name. The race has sprung before, in palaces, in hovels, farms, in armies, convents, and again in towns, in country districts, and perhaps in gaols. But Cádiz, "Improba Gades," the laughing, whitewashed, sea-bound, salt-ringed town, which rises from the waves and seems to float, just as a nautilus lies rocking in the trades, does not at first sight strike one as a cradle for a saint.

The little town of Hercules, built on its tongue of land jutting far out into the sea, and with the great black shoal, Las Puercas, standing sentinel just in the fairway of the port, with its long rows of dazzling houses chequered with bright green jalousies, its streets in which a crowd is never seen, in which the tramp of horses is not heard, *sans* trade, *sans* manufactures, peaceful and seeming far removed from all the troubles of the world, does not seem fitting for the birth of one destined to struggle all his life.

Your perfect rebel, and there can be no saintliness without revolt in some shape or another against the myriad meannesses that dwarf mankind, makes his own struggle, if he but strives against himself. Easier far it would have been

to have sunk into mere resignation (by that sin men have fallen deeper than even angels fell by pride), and to have found all fair, as did the Lord in Eden, till man appeared to break the spell. In the soft windswept, sea-lapped town, where stars come out like fireflies, pale, and sink back into the sky, and where day melts into the night as imperceptibly as if it were a tide, it is so easy to forget.

Dressed in his unsubstantial, southern children's clothes, made out of stuff like bedticking, he must have gone to school, to some poor starveling schoolmaster (the hunger of a schoolmaster is a stock jest in Spain), or some old snuffy priest. Still, in his youth he could not but have showed the promise of his life, just as musicians and great painters composed and painted as soon as they could speak, for saintliness is of the nature of an art.

Even in Cádiz, with its quiet ways, its streets so shady in the heat, so sunny in the cold, its grass-grown plazas and its air as of a woman, fair in youth and yet more beautiful in age, the ordinary injustices of life must have revolted him.

The overladen ass, girth-galled and patient, treading its weary Calvary which leads it to no heaven, except the rest from toil that death affords, must have stirred all his blood. Cats tortured and dogs stoned, no doubt set all his childish nerves a-tingling and his sympathies on edge, as they do those of many children, but with the difference in his case that the indignation lasted all his life, and did not settle down into that careless acquiescence that makes cowards of us all.

Whether he stood and whispered at the grated window, when he grew older, to some girl half seen, or, standing on the pavement, formed with his lips dumb words to some fair Gaditana on a balcony, I do not know, but I imagine that his only love was his old mother, and that, although throughout his life he never knew the name of fear, with women he was timid and did not know the worth of his timidity in women's eyes.

Fortune had given him a little manufactory of playing-cards, left by his father, which in a year or two of philanthropic management soon went to ruin, though I remember now and then, long years ago, to have remarked upon the ace of gold, in Cádiz packs, his name, and to have thought the cards were dingy and looked like blotting-paper. This hindrance to his life having been thus removed, the way was clear for him to run his course. Never again did he own property or any money, but what was necessary for the subsistence of his mother and himself, and that from day to day.

Thus being independent of the world, he naturally, after the fashion of his brother-saints, set out on his career to redress injustices, make things grown crooked straight, and generally to court the martyrdom mankind is ever ready to inflict on all who do not put their necks beneath its yoke.

How he became an anarchist, that is to me unknown; but probably, after the fashion of his countrymen, more by experience of life, than by long poring upon books.

In such a little town as Cádiz, where everything is known, nothing but vice is possible to hide, and that but by the complicity of others, who shield their fellow-sinners for the need they have of them, his views were known to all, and he became a sort of bugbear to the population, who, in the vegetarian dreamer, saw a dangerous revolutionist, and yet received a pleasurable qualm as he passed by, feeling a pride their city had produced so terrible a man. As he walked through the streets, dressed in his threadbare suit of shoddy Barcelona tweed, a soft grey hat upon his head, with his weak eyes shielded by neutral-tinted spectacles, people stepped off the narrow pavement on to the cobble-stones and murmured: "There goes Antichrist." Strange rumours that he maintained a correspondence with the murderers of the Czar gained ground, and sounded terrible to those who had the vaguest of ideas what a Czar really was, and in what portion of the globe Russia was situated. The police began

to dog his footsteps, and to endeavour to get proof against him of some mysterious crime. Was it not patent to mankind that one who lived on bread and milk, who never smoked, or went to bull-fights, and whom no soul in Cádiz had ever seen emerge from out the narrow lane that leads down from the Paseo de Apodaca to the house where dwells La Barquillera and her nymphs, must be a man who cherished dark designs? No Christian ever would have taken to his house lost dogs or kittens, or stopped lighthearted boys from putting out cats' eyes, and pouring paraffin upon them and setting them ablaze. Such practices the Church itself does not condemn, at least by precept, for it knows well that animals are not endowed with souls, and he who seeks to mitigate the torture of their lives is a mere heretic and well deserves the stake.

So, by degrees, the hero of my tale became unpopular with all right-thinking men, and though he shared his pittance with the poor, the very men he helped distrusted him, for charity, although it suffereth long, is never popular.

A famine broke out in the south, with lack of rain for months, so that the earth dried up and cracked, and in the cracks millions of field rats bred, that, issuing from their holes, devoured the remnant of the crops the locusts and the drought had spared, and the sun turned to fire. Month after month it blazed upon the fields, drying the springs and rivers, and parching up the trees. Water was dearer far than wine, and in the little laughing town a hush fell on the streets, whilst in the country hunger stalked abroad and struck men to the ground. Then came the movement of "La Mano Negra," and the authorities, anxious to pay in full all that they owed to one who, in and out of season, always opposed all governments, arrested him and shipped him off incontinently to the Peñón de la Gomera, with shackles on his feet.

For years he sweltered in the sun, wearing the blue and white striped drill in which the Spanish Government dresses

its convicts, on the coast. The little money that his mother sent him he laid out in tobacco for the other convicts, who, used to what they called "the vice," were mad for want of it, and by degrees his fellow-prisoners grew to know him as The Saint. The school he started, teaching the rudiments of education on an old slate, is not forgotten in the wretched little place, which stands up like a miniature Gibraltar, united to the shore by a mere tongue of land.

Somehow or other he escaped, and wandered up and down for months amongst the tribes upon the Riff. Though as a general rule the Moors give up all convicts, except those who, as the phrase goes, "throw away their hats" and join their faith, they seem to have been impressed with the inherent goodness of this prisoner in especial, and passed him on from one tribe to another until he reached Tangier. The Spaniards, in their human, careless way, did not repatriate him to complete his sentence, but let him live as best he could by writing, teaching, and the other little industries of the unlucky man of education compelled to toil for bread.

Something took place in Spain—perhaps the unnecessary birth of some unnecessary prince, the marriage of a princess, or the like event of national importance, and what is known as an "Indulto," that is, the letting out of prisoners (who should never have been sent to gaol) occurred, and once more he was free. His name was growing as a saint, that is, a man who had no vices and spent his life in doing good, but still was quite unfitted for the world he lived in, by his outrageous love of truth.

Then came a half rebellion, and though the saint of Cádiz was not in the town, some speeches he had made served as a pretext to arrest him and, once arrested, he was doomed to be condemned. Again he found himself in prison, though with the feeling of half Spain upon his side, after his speech in his defence.

Years dragged along, and though from time to time accounts leaked out of all that he endured, he might have

rotted and been buried in a ditch had not a general pardon once more taken place. Broken in health and prematurely aged, he wandered back to Cádiz, just as a wounded animal returns to die where it was born; and as instinctively.

Those who had shunned him all his life now stopped him in the street and warmly wrung his hands. Prosperous citizens saluted him, and he became an object of respect, just as a conqueror is worshipped, after the victory is won.

As the sun rose he walked down to the beach, bathed and then basked a little in the sun, and wandering back again, ate with good appetite his bread and milk; and, sitting down to work, translated English scientific works for the Madrid or Barcelona Press at miserable pay.

Death took him quietly, coming as a friend, and in his only clothes, a worn and battered shoddy suit of tweed, his mother seated by his side, dressed in the livery of black that Spanish widows wear, her worn merino shawl setting her walnut-coloured face in a dark frame, he lay upon his bed.

All Cádiz blocked the street, and through the little white-washed, flat-roofed house a long procession filed. Ladies in mourning, and workmen in their ordinary clothes, passed through and gazed at him, and at his mother sitting silently.

Some kissed his hand, and others, patting his mother on the shoulder, essayed to comfort her, just as a horse nestles its nose against the shoulder of its fellow, when he sees it is in pain.

Outside the house the "Comrades" waited in the sun, smoking and talking and spitting in the dust, without the show of grief we in the north affect, but taking everything as natural which happens to a man.

Juan, Pedro, Gil and Saturnino, taking off their hats, shouldered the bier, still smoking, and the procession took its way through the dark street of Columela, to the cemetery. Emerging on the alameda by the sea, it halted, and another band of "Comrades," brown, bullet-headed, and with their cigarettes either behind their ears or in their mouths, relieved

the bearers, pushing their way through the thick crowd that swarmed on every side. Women in black, on every balcony, gazed silently, and as the body passed, signed themselves with the cross, making it first upon the breast, and then in miniature across the mouth. Again the bearers changed, and as they passed the cemetery gates the civil guards, sitting like figures cut in walnut, on their high crested horses from Jerez, saluted almost as if by instinct, their captain looking vacantly before him, so that discipline was saved.

Pushing his way through the dense mass of people, the bier arrived before the grave.

Around it stood a group of workmen, with here and there a person like a schoolmaster out of employment, dressed in black, faded clothes. When the grave had been filled, the sandy soil falling like hail on the cheap coffin lid, a man stood out, and plunged immediately into a maze of words about the virtues of the dead, the rich, the poor, the social revolution, and the glorious red flag. He ceased, amid some rather faltering applause, and a rough comrade took up his parable, his eloquence at times just touching folly, and his folly rising occasionally to eloquence. He finished, sweating and hoarse, muttering: " . . . he was a saint . . . Adios Firmin . . . long live the social revolution . . . long live anarchy."

The ground was beaten in upon the grave, on which the blows of mattock and of spade fell heavily, just as the blows of fortune had descended all his life, on the man resting underneath. The crowd dispersed, and in an hour, once more the town had taken on again its air of emptiness, and in the streets the women walked swinging and balancing upon their hips, just as a square-rigged vessel sways and balances, with a light, leading wind.

A BELLY-GOD

THE Minister of Costalarga lived at the corner of a gaunt, new square, just at the back of the old convent of Las Salesas, in Madrid. The enormous red brick building, now turned into a law court, filled one corner of the square.

Well did the Madrilenian people say it was a barbarous affair, built in a barbarous style, by a barbarian queen.

Dwindling acacias, burned by the sun and wind, with a few clumps of dusty oleanders, stood forlornly here and there, and in the cables of the tramway line, the tails of kites were always to be seen entangled, draggled and dirty, and looking like dead birds.

The nymph that stood upon a dolphin in the middle of the stuccoed fountain basin seemed to be taking medicine through the conch-shell which was stuck into her mouth, and pointed at the sky. One longed to take it from her lips, throw it away, and tell her she had had enough of it.

Over the doorway of the house in which the representative of Costalarga lived was hung the shield of the Republic, barred in broad strips of blue. In the chief quarter of the shield appeared a chain of mountains, on one of which was hung a cap of liberty. Over the last peak of the chain, the sun was rising with a grin. All the compatriots of the Minister, who were marooned, as it were from want of funds, asked their way to the house on which the arms of the Republic were displayed.

On almost every day, at office hours, that is, between eleven and three, one or two olive-coloured men were certain to appear. Andrés, the old Galician hall-porter, looked on them with great disfavour, observing: "There goes another Indian in a top-hat; he is safe to touch our Minister for money! That's all they come about"; then he would curse

their mothers, quite in the Oriental style, calling them sons of sitters at the windows, on the look-out for men.

His fears were not ill-founded, for in addition to his compatriots there was a constant influx of distressed literary men, who came to the Legation knowing the Minister himself was known, as they would say, in the Republic of the Muses, and for a tender-hearted man.

Standing and looking from his window in the square one day, he saw a man reading a newspaper. At the first glance he knew he was a foreigner, ragged and miserable. The man folded his newspaper, which fell into its folds as if it were a map, stuffed it into his pocket, dusted his trousers, pulled up his collar, and fastening up his coat, began to walk towards the house. Then he went back, and sitting down again, once more drew out his dirty newspaper.

"I watched him," said the Minister, "half compassionately! That is to say, half in compassion for myself, for I was married and had children, half in compassion for his misery, for I discerned at once that in the end he would choke down his shyness and his pride and come and call on me.

"At last he did so, and having run the gauntlet of Andrés, was ushered up to where I sat, in a room filled with papers and with books, which perhaps gave him courage to speak out, by their familiar air. Before he spoke he had reminded me of the protagonist, in an old Spanish comedy, *El Bergonzante en Palacio*, he was so ill at ease and shy and awkward in his ways. Beginning in a halting Spanish, with all the verbs in the infinitive, he lapsed at once into his native tongue, when I addressed him in it, after having read his card. On it was written 'Mr. William Heyward'—why do you English alone of all the world put 'Mr.' on your cards, I wonder?—and the address of a poor boarding-house kept by an Englishwoman, one Señora Smith. I looked at Mr. Heyward as he sat twisting his hat round in his hands. Instantly I seemed to read his history. His thin and undecided-looking hands had several warts upon them, and his whole air showed he

was fed on tea and bread and butter, which had turned his skin to a faint muddy colour, something like a frog.

"Withal, I saw he was a man of education, and so when I had given him a cigarette, I asked what it was I could do for him, although I knew he wanted work and food. 'Your Excellency,' he said, and when I said 'For God's sake do not call me Excellency,' he began again, 'Your Excellency, I have ventured . . . ventured to call upon you, though it has cost me a great deal.'

"I knew about his effort, for I had seen it, and knew exactly in which pocket the crushed and much-read newspaper reposed, but merely smiled at him in as encouraging a way as possible.

" 'Your Excellency,' he went on, 'the fact is, I am almost beat. There is nothing for an educated man to do, at least an educated foreigner, here in Madrid. I have been a tutor, teaching English in a family, but lost the job, partly on account, I think, of my bad clothes, and partly because I have no aptitude for teaching anything. I have done a little in the office of an agent for patent medicines, and I have kept Señora Smith's accounts. She is the owner of the boarding-house where I am staying, but now she tells me that she cannot afford to keep me on, and so I have been wandering about looking for literary work . . . to the Consulate, the Embassy, and all the bookshops, but they all bowed me out.'

"I looked at him and did not wonder, for you know what Madrid is like. Everyone writes and no one reads, and even natives of the place have a hard fight to live. A fight, yes, that is the word for life; there is a battle with the climate to begin with, and then with everyone. To make a long story short, I took him into my employment, for I was then at work upon a thousand things. I think I had a book on Costalarga and its resources, mineral and agricultural, and as a field for emigration, on the stocks; some poetry of my own, a novel, and no end of work which rightly should have fallen to the Consul, if we had had one in Madrid.

"Poor Mr. Heyward was profuse in thanks, and I soon found him useful enough for work requiring no initiative. Naturally he could not write shorthand, knew little French, was quite impossible in Spanish, and what I had often found in educated Englishmen, had not the least idea of English grammar or of style. As I paid him every week, he by degrees got into better case, bought a few clothes, and even had a little colour in his cheeks, and I once heard him whistling a 'Tango,' but grossly out of tune.

"Andrés, my porter, never was reconciled to him, and used to speak of him as 'the foundling Englishman the Minister has got to serve as secretary.' I think I told you that Andrés was a Galician, with all the vices and the virtues of his race. No one, not born a millionaire, could possibly have had the sentiment of property better developed than Andrés.

"Though he had never had much property himself, he looked on it as something sacred, and on me, though I confess I could hardly be called a man of property, as his especial charge.

"He used to reason with me, about putting money in a bank, an institution which, as he said, is liable to break, whereas if put into a stocking between two mattresses, or buried in a hole, money is safe, unless a man finds out the hiding-place.

"Nothing that Mr. Heyward possibly could do removed the suspicions of Andrés, who always looked on him in some way as an interloper, and used to ask me, 'Are there not plenty of poor Spaniards, men who understand the pen, but that you must take a foreigner, making your house a foundling hospital?' My porter had the spirit of the province and the town so strongly rooted in his blood, that almost everyone he looked on as a potential enemy, in the same way, no doubt, his Celt-Iberian and Suevian ancestors had looked upon mankind. Two years of service in his youth in Ceuta had but intensified the feeling, though now and then he used to say he had met honest Moors, 'men of one word,' as he

expressed it, although but infidels. As regards human sympathy, he was, just as I fancy are so many Spaniards, far more in sympathy with the Moors than with North Europeans, and certainly a Moor in their streets does not attract half so much criticism as would a Swedish countryman, clothed in his native dress.

"However, quite unconscious of the enmity he had evoked, Heyward went on writing my letters, helping me with my translations, for even if a man knows English pretty well, as I do, there are always niceties that he must miss in a work of long breath."

In point of fact, the Minister's command of English, Heyward used to say, was quite uncanny, and made him feel as if he were the foreigner, and his employer was the Englishman.

"As time went on, I got to like the fellow, and to understand his Anglo-Saxon and his special reticences.

"Sometimes he used to bring crushed, rather withered-looking flowers for my wife, and sweet-meats for the kids. He even would have given cigarettes to the hall-porter had he met with the least encouragement. In fact, he had the milk of human kindness in his blood, and to myself was grateful in so heartfelt a way, it used to make me quite uncomfortable. You know amongst us Latins envy replaces your hypocrisy, and to oblige a man is generally to make an enemy.

"One thing there was about my secretary that was a constant wonder and a source of pity to me. We, you know, have still preserved a little more formality in our address in Spanish countries than you have in the north. Whenever any of these long salutations enquiring as to his health and that of all his family was addressed to him, Heyward would colour up, flush, and become confused, and never find the right reply, but trip up in his speech.

"This attitude was incomprehensible to Spaniards, who used to call him proud and speak of him as being of a despotic character, and a despiser of the poor. When he first learned

this, it pained him to the heart, for if he had to help a dog to jump upon a chair, he did it with humility, as if he did not wish to show the animal that it was in the least inferior to him, even in degree. Little by little he became extremely useful to me, and I used to put off on to his shoulders things that I ought to have looked into personally, about the Embassy.

"A countryman of mine of an inventive turn of mind sent several cases to Madrid of some sort of compressed food that he wanted me to press upon the Government to take up for the troops. I can see the stuff arrive in three middling-sized cases, abnormally heavy, and soldered down with lead.

"Heyward and I opened them, and took note of the contents. I remember thinking if there was anything in the world that possibly could make a soldier's life more ignominious, it was to have to eat such horrid-looking stuff and read the misleading adjective 'palatable' stamped upon each slab. After a week of constant writing, I heard from the War Office that General Cañaheja would be glad to see me on a day, his secretary wrote, that would be convenient to him.

"I very nearly did not go, the form of his communication was so insolent, but after all, I thought, I do not want anything myself, so I will bear it for my countryman, and if his food is so deleterious as it looks, at least it will kill some of them. 'Another Spaniard gone to hell,' as we used to say when we killed one of them during our wars for independence, in my grandfather's time.

"Accompanied by Heyward, for he understood the stuff better than I did, we visited the General at the War Office. The house, which was the palace of Godoy, Prince of the Peace (and lover of the Queen), in the days when Napoleon was about to receive the first kick, here in Spain, that showed mankind that he was vulnerable, was an enormous, red-brick building with the windows faced in stone. It stood upon a little hill, in the middle of a garden, and day and night

sentries paced up and down before its doors. When it so happened that a regiment of cavalry had to furnish men, the additional ridicule was added of a man walking to and fro in spurs, and looking like an alligator when he waddles on the sand. The enormous mass, which, as I said, in old days was the town house of Godoy, and now the focus of all that is most reactionary in Spain, impressed me disagreeably from the first moment that I entered it. One felt that constitutional liberty was left behind outside its iron gate, and that a heavy, but a stupid, hand lay over everything. Orders were shouted even if the men to whom they were delivered stood but a yard away, and the same man who stood so quietly to listen to them, turned and repeated them in the same voice and key to his inferior, who roared to someone else.

"One official passed us on to another, and at last we stood, after climbing innumerable stairs, in the presence of the great man. He received us civilly enough, and promised—I had been a Minister myself in my own country, and know what a man in that position has to say—to look into the matter of the stores. As I looked at his short, squat figure, his blood-shot eyes and bristly moustache, his hairy hands, his ill-made civilian clothes, and recollected that it was he who had shot so many prisoners in cold blood, tortured a few, and finally returned from the last war a millionaire without seeing a shot fired, a mad desire came over me to spring and strangle him.

"Then I laughed at myself, for I reflected that, short-sighted as I was, all I should do would be perhaps to upset the inkstand, and that the General only had to call and I should be conducted out with ignominy, and in the morning the papers would appear with leaded types and with the headline, 'Sudden insanity of a Minister, and a Field-Marshal's calm.'

"So, after thanking General Cañaheja, I withdrew, taking my secretary, and certain that the incident was closed, and the General would have forgotten all about the stores before I well had got into the street. However, I had complied (as we

say), and now could write with a clear conscience to my poor friend at home.

"A few days afterwards, I received a sudden telegram calling me with all my family to Paris, and I remember now, as we walked up and down the station waiting for the train to start, that my poor secretary seemed to be struggling to say something; but I was occupied, and articulate speech was never his strong point, poor fellow, at any time of day. I see him now, as the train slowly drew out of the station, standing, as it were, framed in the rapidly diminishing glass arch, just like a miniature.

"Two months went by, in which I was so occupied in Paris that all thoughts of my secretary or of Madrid were quite obliterated. When I returned at last, as the train slowly jolted through Castile, passing the rocky desert between Avila and the Escorial, stopping at little stations where no one ever was known either to get in or out, all seemed familiar and yet strange to me. Spain has a hold on me that I believe no other country takes, life is so primitive and yet so intense, it seems as if you touched the Middle Ages and the most ultra-modern life, when you stretch out your hands.

"Andrés, the porter welcomed me with a long string of most minute enquiries as to my health, that of my wife and child, and as to how we had got through the journey, the whole concluding with his congratulations on our being once more in the Court. Nothing was to be seen of Mr. Heyward; but on my writing-desk was a long consular report I had asked him to draw out, carefully done and put where I could not have missed it; but without a word from him who drew it up. None of my servants could, or would, tell me about him, till I bethought me of Andrés.

"He came up, bursting with his subject, and informed me that he had something to impart that would astonish me.

" 'That secretary,' he said, 'was nothing but a thief, a stealer of the sacrament. I never liked him from the first. A man that blushed and could not look you in the face when you

but said good morning or good evening in Castilian to him; that made me think about him evilly. Your Excellency, pardon me, not being a son of the country, was too confident. My father always told me, "Andrés, never be confident, do not facilitate a rogue. A rogue is like a Moorish horse; when things are going well, all of a sudden he spies a mare, sets up his back and squeals, and then where are you?" My father, too, had served, as I have, against the infidel.

" 'Yes, Excellency, I will be brief. After a week or two, I remember this John, for I will not now give him the treatment of Don, which he has forfeited, seemed to fall back again into his old ways. He got more shy than ever—"Never trust a shy man, a friar, or a male mule," the proverb says—and never changed his shirt.

" 'With licence, I may say, I think he had no shirt, and by degrees he used to bring in newspapers, handfuls of straw and sticks, that he had gathered in the streets, and other nastiness. One would have thought he was an ostrich about to build a nest. There used to be a smell of burning, and when I tried to look through the keyhole, I found it was plugged up.

" 'Time went on so, and I each day more ill at ease, for, Excellency, I feared the man was plotting something; at last, after ten days or so, myself just like S. Lawrence on his grid-iron, he went away; and from that moment I have never looked upon his face. After a day or two I went into your study, for I had been so put about I was unable to attend to anything . . . even my duties to your Excellency. What a sight was there . . . a heap of ashes in the grate, and all your Excellency's boxes of compressed food standing quite empty, excepting one that had been burned to cook his delicacies. I saw it at a glance, this unlucky John had eaten everything. A wolf, your Excellency, a perfect belly-god. A man born without shame.'

"He stopped at last, and stood with a pleased look upon his face, certain that he had done his duty, and waiting for a word of compliment from me on his fidelity.

"A light broke in upon me, and a tingling, running from my toes, passed up my spinal marrow, making my very hair feel stiff and my skin turn as rough as sandpaper.

"Now I saw why Mr. Heyward's speech had remained undelivered when he came to see me off, despite the throes as of a parturition, which had so shaken him.

"You see, I used to pay him every Saturday, poor devil, and in the two long months that I had been away he had been famishing."

The Minister of Costalarga passed his hand over his sleek black hair uneasily, as he walked up and down the room; then, going to the window, he threw it open with a jerk and gazed out anxiously. No one was seated on the stucco benches of the great, deserted plaza, except a soldier of the Princesa's regiment, in his blue uniform guarded with silver lace. He sat, with a burned-out cigarette just hanging on his lips, in animated conversation with a girl carrying a basket on her arm, who, on her way to market, had stopped a moment, most probably to talk of military matters, with the warrior. The nymph, standing dejectedly upon her dolphin in the water-basin, was the sole witness of their interview. The conch-shell, seen from the side on which they sat, looked a little like an ear-trumpet which she had turned to spy upon their talk and catch their confidences. They did not heed it, and as a light air from the Guadarrama stirred the acacia leaves, making them shiver, and the dry oleanders rustle mournfully, the Minister, coming back into the room, shut to the window, murmuring, "I had half hoped that he might have been there, on the look-out for me."

THE GOLD FISH

OUTSIDE the little straw-thatched café in a small court-yard trellised with vines, before a miniature table painted in red and blue, and upon which stood a dome-shaped pewter teapot and a painted glass half filled with mint, sat Amarabat, resting and smoking hemp. He was of those whom Allah in his mercy (or because man in the Blad-Allah has made no railways) has ordained to run. Set upon the road, his shoes pulled up, his waistband tightened, in his hand a staff, a palm-leaf wallet at his back, and in it bread, some hemp, a match or two (known to him as el spiritus), and a letter to take anywhere, crossing the plains, fording the streams, stuggling along the mountain-paths, sleeping but fitfully, a burning rope steeped in saltpetre fastened to his foot, he trotted day and night—untiring as a camel, faithful as a dog. In Rabat as he sat dozing, watching the greenish smoke curl upwards from his hemp pipe, word came to him from the Khalifa of the town. So Amarabat rose, paid for his tea with half a handful of defaced and greasy copper coins, and took his way towards the white palace with the crenelated walls, which on the cliff, hanging above the roaring tide-rip, just inside the bar of the great river, looks at Salee. Around the horseshoe archway of the gate stood soldiers, wild, fierce-eyed, armed to the teeth, descendants, most of them, of the famed warriors whom Sultan Muley Ismail (may God have pardoned him!) bred for his service, after the fashion of the Carlylean hero Frederic; and Amarabat walked through them, not aggressively, but with the staring eyes of a confirmed hemp-smoker, with the long stride of one who knows that he is born to run, and the assurance of a man who waits upon his lord. Sometime he waited whilst the Khalifa dispensed what he thought justice, chaffered with Jewish pedlars for

cheap European goods, gossiped with friends, looked at the antics of a dwarf, or priced a Georgian or Circassian girl brought with more care than glass by some rich merchant from the East. At last Amarabat stood in the presence, and the Khalifa, sitting upon a pile of cushions, playing with a Waterbury watch, a pistol and a Koran by his side, addressed him thus:

"Amarabat, son of Bjorma, my purpose is to send thee to Tafilet, where our liege lord the Sultan lies with his camp. Look upon this glass bowl made by the Kaffir, but clear as is the crystal of the rock; see how the light falls on the water, and the shifting colours that it makes, as when the Bride of the Rain stands in the heavens, after a shower in spring. Inside are seven gold fish, each scale as bright as letters in an Indian book. The Christian from whom I bought them said originally they came from the Far East where the Djin-descended Jawi live, the little yellow people of the faith. That may be, but such as they are, they are a gift for kings. Therefore, take thou the bowl. Take it with care, and bear it as it were thy life. Stay not, but in an hour start from the town. Delay not on the road, be careful of the fish, change not their water at the muddy pool where tortoises bask in the sunshine, but at running brooks; talk not to friends, look not upon the face of woman by the way, although she were as a gazelle, or as the maiden who when she walked through the fields the sheep stopped feeding to admire. Stop not, but run through day and night, pass through the Atlas at the Glaui; beware of frost, cover the bowl with thine own haik; upon the other side shield me the bowl from the Saharan sun, and drink not of the water if thou pass a day athirst when toiling through the sand. Break not the bowl, and see the fish arrive in Tafilet, and then present them, with this letter, to our lord. Allah be with you, and his Prophet; go, and above all things see thou breakest not the bowl." And Amarabat, after the manner of his kind, taking the bowl of gold fish, placed one hand upon his heart and said: "Inshallah, it shall be as thou

hast said. God gives the feet and lungs. He also gives the luck upon the road."

So he passed out under the horseshoe arch, holding the bowl almost at arms' length so as not to touch his legs, and with the palmetto string by which he carried it, bound round with rags. The soldiers looked at him, but spoke not, and their eyes seemed to see far away, and to pass over all in the middle distance, though no doubt they marked the smallest detail of his gait and dress. He passed between the horses of the guard all standing nodding under the fierce sun, the reins tied to the cantles of their high red saddles, a boy in charge of every two or three: he passed beside the camels resting by the well, the donkeys standing dejected by the firewood they had brought: passed women, veiled white figures going to the baths; and passing underneath the lofty gateway of the town, exchanged a greeting with the half-mad, half-religious beggar just outside the walls, and then emerged upon the sandy road, between the aloe hedges, which skirts along the sea. So as he walked, little by little he fell into his stride; then got his second wind, and smoking now and then a pipe of hemp, began, as Arabs say, to eat the miles, his eyes fixed on the horizon, his stick stuck down between his shirt and back, the knob protruding over the left shoulder like the hilt of a two-handed sword. And still he held the precious bowl from Franquestan in which the golden fish swam to and fro, diving and circling in the sunlight, or flapped their tails to steady themselves as the water danced with the motion of his steps. Never before in his experience had he been charged with such a mission, never before been sent to stand before Allah's vicegerent upon earth. But still the strangeness of his business was what preoccupied him most. The fish like molten gold, the water to be changed only at running streams the fish to be preserved from frost and sun; and then the bowl: had not the Khalifa said at the last, "Beware, break not the bowl"? So it appeared to him that most undoubtedly a charm was in the fish and in the bowl, for who

sends common fish on such a journey through the land? Then he resolved at any hazard to bring them safe and keep the bowl intact, and trotting onward, smoked his hemp, and wondered why he of all men should have had the luck to bear the precious gift. He knew he kept his law, at least as far as a poor man can keep it, prayed when he thought of prayer, or was assailed by terror in the night alone upon the plains; fasted in Ramadan, although most of his life was one continual fast; drank of the shameful but seldom, and on the sly, so as to give offence to no believer, and seldom looked upon the face of the strange women, Daughters of the Illegitimate, whom Sidna Mohammed himself has said, avoid. But all these things he knew were done by many of the faithful, and so he did not set himself up as of exceeding virtue, but rather left the praise to God, who helped his slave with strength to keep his law. Then left off thinking, judging the matter was ordained, and trotted, trotted over the burning plains, the gold fish dancing in the water as the miles melted and passed away.

Duar and Kasbah, castles of the Caids, Arabs' black tents, suddra zaribas, camels grazing—antediluvian in appearance—on the little hills, the muddy streams edged all along the banks with oleanders, the solitary horsemen holding their long and brass-hooped guns, like spears, the white-robed noiseless-footed travellers on the roads, the chattering storks upon the village mosques, the cow-birds sitting on the cattle in the fields—he saw, but marked not, as he trotted on. Day faded into night, no twilight intervening, and the stars shone out, Soheil and Rigel with Betelgeuse and Aldebaran, and the three bright lamps which the cursed Christians know as the Three Maries—called, he supposed, after the mother of their Prophet; and still he trotted on. Then by the side of a lone palm-tree springing up from a cleft in a tall rock, an island on the plain, he stopped to pray; and sleeping, slept but fitfully, the strangeness of the business making him wonder; and he who cavils over matters in the night can never rest, for thus

the jackal and the hyena pass their nights talking and reasoning about the thoughts which fill their minds when men die with their faces covered in their haiks, and after prayer sleep. Rising after an hour or two and going to the nearest stream, he changed the water of his fish, leaving a little in the bottom of the bowl, and dipping with his brass drinking-cup into the stream for fear of accidents. He passed the Kasbah of el Daudi, passed the land of the Rahamna, accursed folk always in "siba," saw the great snowy wall of Atlas rise, skirted Marakesh, the Kutubieh, rising first from the plain and sinking last from sight as he approached the mountains and left the great white city sleeping in the plain.

Little by little the country altered as he ran: cool streams for muddy rivers, groves of almond-trees, ashes and elms, with grape-vines binding them together as the liana binds the canela and the urunday in the dark forests of Brazil and Paraguay. At midday when the sun was at its height, when locusts, whirring through the air, sank in the dust as flying-fish sink in the waves, when palm-trees seem to nod their heads, and lizards are abroad drinking the heat and basking in the rays, when the dry air shimmers, and sparks appear to dance before the traveller's eye, and a thin, reddish dust lies on the leaves, on clothes of men, and upon every hair of horses' coats, he reached a spring. A river springing from a rock, or issuing after running underground, had formed a little pond. Around the edge grew bulrushes, great catmace, water-soldiers, tall arums and metallic-looking sedge-grass, which gave an air as of an outpost of the tropics lost in the desert sand. Fish played beneath the rock where the stream issued, flitting to and fro, or hanging suspended for an instant in the clear stream, darted into the dark recesses of the sides; and in the middle of the pond enormous tortoises, horrid and antediluvian-looking, basked with their backs awash or raised their heads to snap at flies, and all about them hung a dark and fetid slime.

A troop of thin brown Arab girls filled their tall amphoræ

whilst washing in the pond. Placing his bowl of fish upon a jutting rock, the messenger drew near. "Gazelles," he said, "will one of you give me fresh water for the Sultan's golden fish?" Laughing and giggling, the girls drew near, looked at the bowl, had never seen such fish. "Allah is great; why do you not let them go in the pond and play a little with their brothers?" And Amarabat with a shiver answered, "Play, let them play! and if they come not back my life will answer for it." Fear fell upon the girls, and one advancing, holding the skirt of her long shift between her teeth to veil her face, poured water from her amphora upon the fish.

Then Amarabat, setting down his precious bowl, drew from his wallet a pomegranate and began to eat, and for a farthing buying a piece of bread from the women, was satisfied, and after smoking, slept, and dreamed he was approaching Tafilet; he saw the palm-trees rising from the sand; the gardens; all the oasis stretching beyond his sight; at the edge the Sultan's camp, a town of canvas, with the horses, camels, and the mules picketed, all in rows, and in the midst of the great "duar" the Sultan's tent, like a great palace all of canvas, shining in the sun. All this he saw, and saw himself entering the camp, delivering up his fish, perhaps admitted to the sacred tent, or at least paid by a vizier as one who has performed his duty well. The slow match blistering his foot, he woke to find himself alone, the "gazelles" departed, and the sun shining on the bowl, making the fish appear more magical, more wondrous, brighter, and more golden than before.

And so he took his way along the winding Atlas paths, and slept at Demnats, then, entering the mountains, met long trains of travellers going to the south. Passing through groves of chestnuts, walnut-trees, and hedges thick with blackberries and travellers' joy, he climbed through vineyards rich with black Atlas grapes, and passed the flat mud-built Berber villages nestling against the rocks. Eagles flew by and moufflons gazed at him from the peaks, and from the

thickets of lentiscus and dwarf arbutus wild boars appeared, grunted, and slowly walked across the path, and still he climbed, the icy wind from off the snow chilling him in his cotton shirt, for his warm Tadla haik was long ago wrapped round the bowl to shield the precious fish. Crossing the Wad Ghadat, the current to his chin, his bowl of fish held in one hand, he struggled on. The Berber tribesmen at Tetsula and Zarkten, hard-featured, shaved but for a chin-tuft, and robed in their "achnifs" with the curious eye woven in the skirt, saw he was a "rekass," or thought the fish not worth their notice, so gave him a free road. Night caught him at the stone-built, antediluvian-looking Kasbah of the Glaui, perched in the eye of the pass, with the small plain of Teluet two thousand feet below. Off the high snow-peaks came a whistling wind, water froze solid in all the pots and pans, earthenware jars and bottles throughout the castle, save in the bowl which Amarabat, shivering and miserable, wrapped in his haik and held close to the embers, hearing the muezzin at each call to prayers; praying himself to keep awake so that his fish might live. Dawn saw him on the trail, the bowl wrapped in a woollen rag, and the fish fed with bread-crumbs, but himself hungry and his head swimming with want of sleep, with smoking "kief," and with the bitter wind which from El Tisi N'Glaui flagellates the road. Right through the valley of Teluet he still kept on, and day and night still trotting, trotting on, changing his bowl almost instinctively from hand to hand, a broad leaf floating on the top to keep the water still, he left Agurzga, with its twin castles, Ghresat and Dads, behind. Then rapidly descending, in a day reached an oasis between Todghra and Ferkla, and rested at a village for the night. Sheltered by palm-trees and hedged round with cactuses and aloes, either to keep out thieves or as a symbol of the thorniness of life, the village lay, looking back on the white Atlas gaunt and mysterious, and on the other side towards the brown Sahara, land of the palm-tree (Belad-el-Jerid), the refuge of the true Ishmaelite; for in

the desert, learning, good faith, and hospitality can still be found—at least, so Arabs say.

Orange and azofaifa trees, with almonds, sweet limes and walnuts, stood up against the waning light, outlined in the clear atmosphere almost so sharply as to wound the eye.

Around the well goats and sheep lay, whilst a girl led a camel round the Noria track; women sat here and there and gossiped with their tall earthenware jars stuck by the point into the ground, and waited for their turn, just as they did in the old times, so far removed from us, but which in Arab life is but as yesterday, when Jacob cheated Esau, and the whole scheme of Arab life was photographed for us by the writers of the Pentateuch. In fact, the self-same scene which has been acted every evening for two thousand years throughout North Africa, since the adventurous ancestors of the tribesmen of to-day left Hadrumut or Yemen, and upon which Allah looks down approvingly, as recognising that the traditions of his first recorded life have been well kept. Next day he trotted through the barren plain of Seddat, the Jibel Saghra making a black line on the horizon to the south. Here Berber tribes sweep in their razzias like hawks; but who would plunder a rekass carrying a bowl of fish? Crossing the dreary plain and dreaming of his entry into Tafilet, which now was almost in his reach not two days distant, the sun beating on his head, the water almost boiling in the bowl, hungry and footsore, and in the state betwixt waking and sleep into which those who smoke hemp on journeys often get, he branched away upon a trail leading towards the south. Between the oases of Todghra and Ferkla, nothing but stone and sand, black stones on yellow sand; sand, and yet more sand, and then again stretches of blackish rocks with a suddra bush or two, and here and there a colocynth, bitter and beautiful as love or life, smiling up at the traveller from amongst the stones. Towards midday the path led towards a sandy tract all overgrown with sandrac bushes and crossed by trails of jackals and hyenas, then it quite disappeared, and Amarabat

waking from his dream saw he was lost. Like a good shepherd, his first thought was for his fish; for he imagined the last few hours of sun had made them faint, and one of them looked heavy and swam sideways, and the rest kept rising to the surface in an uneasy way. Not for a moment was Amarabat frightened, but looked about for some known landmark, and finding none started to go back on his trail. But to his horror the wind which always sweeps across the Sahara had covered up his tracks, and on the stony paths which he had passed his feet had left no prints. Then Amarabat, the first moments of despair passed by, took a long look at the horizon, tightened his belt, pulled up his slipper heels, covered his precious bowl with a corner of his robe, and started doggedly back upon the road he thought he traversed on the deceitful path. How long he trotted, what he endured, whether the fish died first, or if he drank, or, faithful to the last, thirsting met death, no one can say. Most likely wandering in the waste of sandhills and of suddra bushes he stumbled on, smoking his hashish while it lasted, turning to Mecca at the time of prayer, and trotting on more feebly (for he was born to run), till he sat down beneath the sundried bushes where the Shinghiti on his Mehari found him dead beside the trail. Under a stunted sandarac tree, the head turned to the east, his body lay, swollen and distorted by the pangs of thirst, the tongue protruding rough as a parrot's, and beside him lay the seven golden fish, once bright and shining as the pure gold when the goldsmith pours it molten from his pot, but now turned black and bloated, stiff, dry, and dead. Life the mysterious, the mocking, the inscrutable, unseizable, the uncomprehended essence of nothing and of everything, had fled, both from the faithful messenger and from his fish. But the Khalifa's parting caution had been well obeyed, for by the tree, unbroken, the crystal bowl still glistened beautiful as gold, in the fierce rays of the Saharan sun.

LAST OF HIS RACE

NATURE and fortune had combined to shower most of the gifts in their possession on Bernardino de Velasco, Duke of Frías, Hereditary Grand Constable of Castile, Count of Oropesa, of Haro and a Grandee of Spain.

These dignities and titles he had inherited from a long line of ancestors. The Count of Haro of those days was made Grand Constable upon the field of Nájera, where the Black Prince and Pedro the el Cruel, or el Justiciero, according to the bent of the historian, defeated Du Guesclin, the great mercenary soldier, and Henry de Trastamara, Don Pedro's bastard brother, and the usurper of his throne. Even in those days, the Velascos were an ancient family, for the saying was, "Before that God was God, or the sun lit up the mountains, the Quiros were Quiros and the Velascos, Velascos."*

These things came to him by inheritance, after he had given himself the trouble to be born, as dignities, titles and estates have come to many a slobbering fool, with piping eunuch's voice, weak knees and weaker mind.

In Bernardino's case, Nature's having set her hand to the plough had not looked backwards, but driven a straight furrow, till her task was done. Alert and active as an Arab or a Návajo, his well-shaped hands and feet, his little ears that clung like limpets to his head with its crop of dark brown hair, aquiline nose, small mouth and teeth, as white as, says tradition, were those of Allah's own messenger, our Lord Mahommed, gave him an air of race. When he walked into a room, he looked like a young thoroughbred amongst a bunch of cart-horses.

*Antes que Dios fuese Dios ó el sol iluminaba los peñascos, Los Quiros eran Quiros y los Velascos, Velascos.

The Quiros was another ancient family.

Quick-witted and a good linguist, he spoke Spanish and English indifferently, for he had been at Eton, and his mother was the daughter of Balfe, the composer of the *Bohemian Girl*. French he was quite at home in, and Portuguese from his long residence in Portuguese East Africa, and Arabic enough to swear at camel-drivers, when their animals upset his horse. His father had been a legendary aristocrat, such as Balzac might well have chosen for the hero of one of his minor studies of mankind.

Dumas would have seized upon him with avidity, for he appeared to have walked straight from his novels, or rather, never to have emerged from them.

He started life the owner of great estates, that stretched half over Spain from Córdoba to La Rioja, a palace in Madrid, in Biarritz the Villa Frias, and wonderful old houses in several towns, such as La Casa del Cordón in Burgos, a splendid specimen of a Renaissance mansion of a Spanish gentleman.

All these possessions he proceeded to get rid of, chiefly at the gaming table, and by always living as if the Rand, Golconda, Ouro Preto, Kimberley and the platinum mines of the Chocó had been his private property. He died, as befitted a Spanish nobleman of his kidney, greatly impoverished, leaving to his son, Bernardino, but a tithe of his vast properties. What he could not help bequeathing him was his handsome figure and quick wit. His English mother left him her blue eyes and a slight English accent in speaking Spanish that never left him till his dying day. Perhaps it was not quite an accent, but an intonation, for naturally he spoke his native language perfectly.

His English, although perfect, also still had a faint, almost imperceptible tang about it, such as an iron key, to which a leather label is attached, dropped into a whole pipe of wine, is said to leave a tinge of leather and of iron to the fastidious palate of the connoisseur.

His mother left him, in addition to the intonation and blue eyes, musical talent that his friend and master Sarasate used to say, had he but had the spur of poverty, would have made him one of the first violinists of the world, little inferior to himself.

As a child, he used to play upon his grandfather's violin (a fine Amati), almost by instinct, and after Sarasate took him in hand, as a mere lad at Eton, his aptitude was the delight and the despair of the great virtuoso, who stood entranced when after a few lessons his pupil executed passages with ease that others after months of study failed to execute. Upon the other hand, nothing would make him study, or devote the hours to practice that alone gives to natural talent technical success. I do not say that Sarasate tore his hair, for he was far too careful of his appearance, but he used to say, "If but Don Bernardino would devote himself for a whole year to music, under my tuition, with the natural talent that he has, and with the halo of his title encompassing his head, he might go to America, that paradise of snobs, and return home a millionaire." Thus spoke Sarasate, much in the vein of Zarathustra (by the mouth of Nietzsche), but it was not to be. Nature had done her best, but even she is powerless before fate.

In every branch of life she had done all she could, for Frias was a perfect horseman, with the hands that only nature gives and that no teaching and all the practice in the world cannot supply, for, in the words of the old Spanish saw, "What nature does not give, Salamanca is powerless to lend." A good shot, excellent fencer and a tireless walker, he had a constitution that only years of dissipation at last undermined. With all these gifts, nature had omitted to endow him with a sense of responsibility. All through his life he acted after the fashion of one of Captain Marryat's midshipmen, or like a child sent into a pastrycook's, without the hand of a controlling nurserymaid. What he fancied he would have, no matter at what cost, and yet he was not wanting in a certain kind of common sense. Like many men

of his position, he talked twenty per cent above his real ability, from having mingled on familiar terms with politicians of high rank, great artists, writers, engineers, and leaders of society. He had not the least shadow of a pose, and, like all Spaniards, had the same manner when he addressed a carter or a prince.

Women adored him, for he had that magnetic personality that attracts them, as valerian attracts cats, or jam left on a table is a certain lure to wasps.

Nothing was further from his mind than were ulterior motives, and certainly no man ever sought for personal advantage less than he did, from the cradle to the grave.

'Tis true he never paid his debts, except those falsely called of honour, contracted at the card tables, whereas the only real debts of honour are to the baker, butcher, bootmaker and tailor, that a man owes for value he receives.

As a mere boy just after he left Eton, as Count of Haro, for he was not then Duke of Frías, as his father was alive, he drifted to Tangier, as an unpaid secretary to the Spanish minister.

Those were the days when Tangier was one of the most fascinating places in the whole world to live in; a miniature Constantinople, it had representatives of every Court in Europe, a consul-general from the United States, and ministers or consuls, who behaved like ministers, from many South American Republics. Flags of the various nations fluttered from half a hundred houses in the town. Adventurers who styled themselves presidents of Patagonia, kings of Araucania, and other hypothetic states, hoisted the flags of their fantastic countries, and whilst their money lasted, if they were presentable, spoke "diplomatic French," were not seen drunk in public, or committed any flagrant misdemeanour, were received as cordially in the tolerant society of the place as if they had been representatives of real countries to be found upon the map. The Moors looked on them all with awe, mixed with amusement, and regarded them as amiable

madmen who, for some purpose of his own that he had not disclosed, Allah had endowed with the command of fleets and armies, and with mighty engines of destruction, so that it behoved the faithful to walk warily in their dealings with them. Tangier was then one of the dirtiest towns in the whole world, outside of China, but perfectly safe to live in, for robberies were rare and crimes of violence practically unknown, and though most Europeans "packed," as cow-punchers used to say, a pistol, it was quite unnecessary. The advance of progress and international control had not at that time partially cleaned the streets, nor had the scum of the Levant and criminals from Europe made the place nearly as subject to robberies and crimes as are most European towns. Into this pleasant, evil-smelling, picturesque and old-world little town, where every European who could afford five-and-twenty dollars for a horse equipped himself with boots and spurs and rode about splashing the dirty water of the streets on the foot-passengers, with as much disregard of consequences as John the Baptist when he performed mass baptism in the Jordan, the young Count of Haro was propelled, by destiny. From the first day he found himself at home. As if by magic all the Moors seemed to know him. Certainly he was a striking figure on his horse, with the wind blowing up the front brim of the wide grey felt hat that people wore in those days in Tangier, and his air of careless insouciance, for he was at the age when one has bought the world on credit and not received the bill. He never seemed to go to the Legation, which for that matter seemed to go on quite well without him, under the management of one of those staid diplomatists who, at that time in Spain, either finished up their career at some small German Court or at Madrid, as "Ministre des Affaires Inutiles."

But as even the unpaid secretary of a Legation must have a serious object in his life, Frías, who by this time was one of the chief figures of the British colony, passing much more of his time with them than with his countrymen, entered into

partnership with Crawhall, the painter, a kindred spirit and as fine a rider as himself, to hunt the Tangier hounds. He constituted himself master, and nominated Crawhall as first whip, and with the assistance of a nondescript youth born in Gibraltar, who maltreated English and Spanish, quite indifferently, but had a good acquaintance with all the oaths and the foul language of both tongues, rode well and boldly, and answered to the name of "Mataburro," he started out on the first serious business of his life. Nothing was stranger than to see Frías—for by his father's death he had succeeded to the dukedom—and Crawhall at a meet of the Tangier pack: Frías immaculately dressed in pink, his whip in a weather-stained mulberry-coloured hunting frock, with "Mataburro" in a pair of tightly-fitting Spanish trousers, patched at the seat with cloth of a different colour, a bull-fighter's flat hat from Cordoba, tied with a bit of greasy black elastic underneath the chin, and *alpargatas* on his feet. The pack was a collection such as it would be difficult to match in any country, with its three couple of mangy-looking fox-hounds, from Gibraltar, with several mongrels of undecided race that Mataburro always referred to as "the bastards," and three or four half-bred fox-terriers. Foxes were scarce, and the heterogeneous pack ran wildly, the "bastards" keeping up a perpetual yelping, and at a check, the terriers snapping at the other dogs or fighting fiercely with one another.

Anyone who had a horse came out, and when the run, if there had been one, or in any case the gallop, finished, a cap went round into which Frías always put a sovereign, "to warm it," as he said. It often formed the bulk of the day's takings, for nearly everybody seemed to have forgotten to bring money with him. Some fairly slunk away when they had an opportunity; others remained behind to tighten up their girths, or slacken them, and others cantered off, shouting out, "Adios, Duque, I will send on a sovereign when I get home." Needless to say it never came, but Bernardino cared nothing for it, for by his father's death he found himself,

although his father had disposed of most of his estates, with ready money in his pocket that seemed inexhaustible. As they rode home, leaving the pack to be brought back by Mataburro, a duty he performed after having filled his pockets full of stones, to throw at laggers, Frías would show the empty cap to Crawhall with a laugh, and Crawhall, who spoke but little but when he did so always to the point, would mutter, "What a crowd of sons of bitches," and jog silently along.

These were the halcyon days whilst money lasted, and before Bernardino had turned into the desperate gambler that he afterwards became. Though some of the great family estates had come into his possession, they were but a tithe of those which his father owned. The Villa Frías, in Biarritz, had been sold; most of the lands of El Paular, not far off from Segovia, a domain of mountain and of wood, full of all kinds of game, from wolves, lynxes and wild cats to deer, hares, rabbits and partridges, had gone to satisfy the money-lenders. Gone were the estates in which the mediæval castle of the Frias reared its head upon a rock, the overlordship of the towns that once the family possessed; gone was La Casa del Cordón in Burgos, and the ancestral palace in Madrid. Still, enough had survived that, had Bernardino but possessed a little of that common sense that nature had forgotten to endow him with at birth, he might yet have retrieved his fortunes with good management, for his estates, like those of almost every other Spanish nobleman, were left to an administrator, and produced but a mere fraction of their worth. Care, prudence, management, were things that Bernardino never understood, if indeed he knew that they existed. Slowly but steadily he began to pile up debts, to borrow money from his administrators, to lend to anyone who asked him, and to tread with filial affection the path his father had marked out for him.

Old-fashioned Spaniards nodded their heads and said that it was lucky that El Duque had not been born a woman, for he was unable to say "No."

Everyone liked him, and he went on hunting his mongrel pack of hounds, gambling and losing far more than he could afford, or sometimes pay, except by giving orders on his administrators, who, like the unjust steward in the Bible, invariably wrote fifty in their books when the amount was ten.

Although he never practised, occasionally he played the violin at High Mass in the Franciscan chapel, rising on one side of the choir, immaculately dressed and executing Sarasate's *Habanera*, or some piece of Chopin's with all the grace of a consummate virtuoso, whilst the packed audience of every nationality longed to break out into applause, only restraining their admiration because they thought that it would not be pleasing to the Deity.

Outside, the Spanish loafers, Portuguese fishermen, the convicts who had escaped from El Peñón de la Gomera, or from Alhucemas, and the Italian sailors from the port, who had been kneeling in the street, beating their breasts and crossing themselves at the proper places, now and then cursing the hardness of the cobble-stones they kneeled upon, broke into unrestrained applause. Possibly, if he observed them, when he looked down upon the world occasionally, the Deity that the devout were fearful to offend gave them a kindly smile.

It was in Tangier that he met his wife, an English lady who at the time of their marriage was almost as irresponsible as he was himself, and overhead in love with him, as she remained throughout her life, in spite of his long absences, his innumerable infidelities, and his perfect disregard of everything that marriage should imply. The difference between them was that advancing years, and the feeling of impending catastrophe, that always seemed to hover about Bernardino, making you feel that in the Scottish phrase he was "fey," altered her character and made her fit for a long time to struggle with the money difficulties that soon overwhelmed them.

He himself did not seem to feel that there was any danger, or if he did, resigned himself to fate, like the historic Indian who, swept over Niagara in a canoe, ceased paddling, folding his arms before the plunge. Tangier became too difficult to live in, for debts accumulated, and to meet them the only way was to borrow at exorbitant interest from usurers in Madrid, or to sell bits of property at any price that they would fetch. Transferred to Vienna as second or third secretary, Tangier saw nothing of him for several years. No place in Europe could have been so dangerous for him as was the Vienna of those days. A gay society, with nearly all its members votaries of high play, women who changed their lovers almost as often as their gowns, everything was there to attract Bernardino Frías and to encourage him to run more desperately into debt.

With Budapest for an occasional holiday and a run home to Madrid, where he belonged to all the clubs—and in the clubs in those days in Madrid everyone gambled—the long-expected crash that everyone had seen was bound to come took place. A disagreeable business at the card table, the rights and wrongs of which were never brought to light, and Vienna became too hot for him. Madrid was too expensive for a man in his position, a personal friend of the King, Alfonso XII, the father of the Don Alfonso now dethroned and a wanderer. Moreover it was not congenial to his wife, who cared nothing for society, and at that time spoke little of the language. Once more he drifted back to Tangier, where he had spent so many of his happiest years. Money was scarcer with him than of old. Crawhall came out only in winter, and his old crony Bibi Carleton was settled in Alcázar el Kebir, running a flour mill, and, to the delight of all his friends, consular agent of Great Britain, with an enormous Union Jack above his house.

Frias and his wife settled down at the "New York Hotel" upon the beach, a third-rate caravanserai run by a Catalan, one Don Anselmo, a most long-suffering man as regards payment

of his bills, and always ready to supply El Duque with any money he required. Not that Anselmo was a usurer, for I believe he never charged a penny for the relatively large sums with which he "facilitated" Bernardino, as runs the Spanish phrase. Frias and his wife, who was a first-class horsewoman, kept several horses, that Mataburro, now better dressed and less disreputable, looked after, and styled himself "the Duke's stud-groom." They went out pigsticking, for Bernardino was a first-class "spear," riding as if he had a dozen necks to break, and still had one to spare in his coat pocket.

The scandal at the Austrian Court became forgotten, and Tangier Society would have opened wide its tolerant portals to them. His wife cared less and less for any gaiety, and Bernardino, who at that time drank far more whisky than was good for him, played cards with all and sundry, losing more than he could afford, with anyone who cared to play with him.

His love affairs were innumerable, although he always said, I think quite honestly, that he had never really loved another woman than his wife.

Certainly he asked her advice on all occasions, but never followed it. Had he but done so, he would have had a less disastrous ending to his life, for, as the proverb has it, "A woman's advice is of small value, but he who does not take it is a fool."

It never seemed to have occurred to him that he had still two properties in Spain. One, in the province of Córdoba and another in Toledo, just where that province joins Estremadura. The property in Córdoba that was situated on the banks of the Guadalquivir was one of those great flat expanses of alluvial soil common in Andalusia, and was practically a great olive yard. It is quite possible that Bernardino had never seen it in his life, or visited it but once or twice. Though probably encumbered, it was absolutely his own property, inherited from his ancestors. An administrator

rack-rented the tenants, and most certainly cheated the owner to the best of his ability. Occasionally Frías would say, I will do this or that "when I receive my olive money." This, I think, was the sole interest he took in the place, for in those days few Spanish noblemen lived on their estates, but spent their rents either in Madrid or Paris, Biarritz, Deauville or Ostend. In such resorts they passed their time, in what is called High Life, with gamesters, pimps and players, with jockeys, cocottes, bull-fighters, and similar indecencies.

These gentry soon consumed most of what had been left of the great Frías properties. Frías still hung about Tangier, living but poorly with his wife in the "New York Hotel" upon the beach, a hostelry that, with the discomforts of a Spanish *fonda* of those times, still lacked the saving grace of picturesqueness. However, we all frequented it, partly because of "Auld lang syne" and partly because the proprietor Anselmo never sent in a bill unless it was demanded of him, and was always willing to oblige with a small loan without security. Our horses lived in a ramshackle stable at the back, and only cost us a peseta for their keep. Mataburro, who was paid irregularly, presided over the Moorish lads, who served as grooms, and stole the horses' corn with regularity, in spite of various double-thongings that Frias, Bibi and Crawhall used to administer when they caught him in the act.

Then he would curse a little, rub his shoulders, and swear by all the saints that one day he would have the blood of some of them. Nobody minded what he said, for all knew that, in the words of Molière, "cinq ou six coups de bâton ne font que regaillardir l'amour," and he well knew he was a universal favourite.

All things, apparently, must have an end, and one day, as I sat with the duchess having the concoction of birch bark that passed as tea, Frías came in, and throwing down his whip upon the table, quite with the air of Brennus when he cast his sword into the scales, called for a whisky and announced

briefly: "I am ruined and have not a peseta in the world." We all knew that, so no one spoke, till his wife asked him what he proposed to do.

Nothing would make him listen to his wife's advice, that they should leave Tangier and settle down on his own property in Spain and see that it was properly administered. "No, no," he said, "I could not stand life in the Spanish country, the eternal chaffering with the peasants, or the attending one of the local councils, to debate what price we ought to give for a pair of wolf's ears, when you were certain all the time the man who bought them in had only shot a dog."

It appeared he had heard that in Lisbon the Duke of Albuquerque was going out to Portuguese East Africa, with some kind of an expedition, of which he was the chief. "I'll wire to him," he said, "and see if he can take me with him as deputy administrator, or anything he likes." He framed a telegram, as lawyers say when it figures in your account. Then it appeared he had no money for the telegram.

Anselmo handed him two dollars, and getting on his horse, he said, "I'll take it," and disappeared upon the beach, galloping furiously. An hour passed by and he returned, explaining that he had not sent the telegram, for a poor Spanish woman had begged for alms from him, and as he said, "Whatever could I do?"

Eventually the telegram was sent, and in a day or two the answer came offering him the post of deputy administrator in Mozambique. He sailed from Lisbon, taking with him, luckily, as it turned out, a Moor from Sus, known as Abdallah el Susi, who was much attached to him, as personal servant, groom, gun-carrier, or anything that might turn up in a wild country.

Slight and well-made, active, not very dark in colour, and speaking Spanish perfectly, Abdallah had been in a circus, had visited most of the European capitals, and spoke, as well as Spanish, some English and a word or two of French. A

strict Mohammedan, who in his life had never taken any drink, or even smoked a cigarette—for drink, of course, his faith prohibited, and smoking he called "drinking the shameful"—he looked on Frías, as he said, as his father, meaning that he admired him for his open-handedness, his generosity, and his wild ways.

"El Duque is a child of the illegitimate," by which he meant he was afraid of nothing, for in Arabic the phrase is used just as the Spaniards in Cervante's time used "Hideputa," and the Elizabethan English whoreson, either in praise or blame.

After a week in Lisbon and a fortnight in London, getting his colonial outfit of things that generally prove absolutely useless in a colony, Frías, in his new character of deputy administrator, clothed in a khaki uniform, then a new and mysterious fabric, with a sword enclosed in a leather-covered scabbard, and crowned with a slouch hat such as our troops wore in the Boer War, accompanied by Abdallah, sailed for Port Amelia. During the fortnight he had got rid of the last remains of his own and his wife's ready money, and pawned his violin that his friends had to redeem, and must have sailed almost penniless. Luckily his expenses were all paid.

He left his wife to administer his property. After a long dispute and several law-suits, she managed to get the most urgent of the claims against her husband paid, and some of the usurers who had lent money at monstrous rates of interest satisfied.

Most of her private fortune had been already sacrificed to pay the debts her husband had incurred, chiefly at the card-table.

As was to be expected, Frias and Albuquerque, a careful colonial administrator soon came to loggerheads, and Frías found himself without a penny, in a colony where white men, except the very poorest, never did manual work. However, he was still well under forty, and with Abdallah, now his one friend and his companion, went to work at daily wages on the

roads. He must have suffered terribly, not in his pride, for Spaniards are devoid of snobbishness, but in the hard toil under the tropic sun, to which his former life had not accustomed him. His real and praise-worthy pride stopped him from writing to his wife for assistance.

Abdallah probably suffered less, for in his youth he had worked as a boatman on the Moroccan coasts. He found a wife amongst his co-religionists, and then, as Frías used to say, "We had better food and got our shirts washed regularly."

Six months went past, and then Abdallah found a second wife, and things went easier, with the two strangely assorted friends.

They bought a boat, and used to take out cargo to the ships in Port Amelia, toiling as Frías said, like galley slaves, at the great clumsy oars. For a short time they prospered, and Abdallah hired some negroes to help him in the boat.

Frías obtained a post as manager of a plantation, but soon lost it, as he had no idea of business, hated confinement at a desk, and when his pay came in, used to resort to a little town upon the coast to gamble, indulge in dissiptation, and return to the plantation in a miserable state.

Nine years went by, years that he never cared to speak of, but that must have been a hell.

His wife sent money when she could; but he instantly lost it at the gaming-table, drifted once more back to the roads at daily wages, whilst suffering terribly from tropical diseases, the result of working in the sun and rain, with every now and then a trip to Ibo, and its dissipations. By this time Abdallah had become quite a substantial man in a small way. Occasionally he led the prayers in the mosque, began to lard his speech with bits of the Koran, had several children, and was beginning to grow stout.

He never touched an oar, but steered his launch, dressed in immaculate white clothes, with a well-pleated turban on his head, and a stout wooden rosary in his left hand. Nothing impaired his friendship and respect for his old master, for the

nine years of hardships and adventure they had passed together had blotted out all difference of rank, of race, almost of religion, though both of them, as often happens in men of their sort, though lax in practice, were staunch believers in their creeds.

How it all happened Frías never was quite sure. Abdallah, had he survived, would have said that "it was written," which after all is perhaps the best way to explain anything.

Coming back from a vessel in the roads upon a stormy day in their launch laden with merchandise, running the surf that they had negotiated a hundred times, their boat upset. The negro crew swam to shore like Newfoundland dogs, emerging on the sand as easily as a Kanaka rides the surf. Frías, though not a very powerful swimmer, got ashore somehow or other, and lay exhausted on the beach. Abdallah never reappeared.

Thus Frías always used to say: "I lost the best friend that I ever had." Probably this was true enough, for, with the exception of the Moor, of "Creeps" and "Bibi," he had no real friends, after the way of men who easily make friends with everybody.

After Abdallah's death, and having wasted nine years of his life, if life spent in adventure and hard work is ever really wasted, finding himself with enough money to pay his passage, second- or third-class, he came back to Europe, as penniless as when he set out.

This was the fashion of his coming home:

Seated one day in my flat in Basil Street, cursing the rain that fell as ceaselessly as when Shakespeare's clown was a very little boy, the maid told me that a foreign sailor-looking man wanted to see me at the door. I looked at him, and for the moment did not recognise him. Dressed in an old blue suit, unshaved and miserably thin, white canvas shoes upon his feet and carrying a bundle and a dilapidated suit-case, I hesitated, till he said: "Dino, Bernardino Frías, don't you recognise me?"

We had what is called in Spanish "un cordial abrazo," that is an embrace, such as you read of in the Bible, when friends met after an absence. An hour passed like a minute, as he told of his nine years' purgatory, from which he had returned, penniless and suffering either from malaria, framboesia, or some tropical disease or other.

Then he went off to join his wife, who lived some little distance out of town.

The luck had turned, if he had only known how to profit by it. During his absence, his wife had shepherded his estates, so that he had a tolerable income, and thus the nine years of exile had not been wasted. For six months all went well, and then he gradually went back to his old ways. "The wild goat always seeks the wood," the proverb says, and in his case the proberb was unfortunately true. Back in Madrid, he soon became a friend of King Alfonso XIII, joined the best clubs, where play was high, and lived with people far richer than himself.

Named Senator for Cádiz, he tried politics, but had no aptitude for them, and fell back to the life of a man without occupation about Madrid.

Then as his wife hated Madrid and had to educate their daughter, he tried country life, on one of his own properties, and built a shooting lodge, where he lived, often for months together with several boon companions and a girl rather inappropriately called Modesta, whom he had met at a street corner one night after the theatre.

Not pretty and but moderately faithful to him, she must have cared for him in the way most Spanish women care for the man they live with, treating them half as superior beings and half as children that it is woman's place to work for, put up with their neglect, pardon their infidelities, half to love, half to despise, but not to leave, till they are cast off or till death separates them.

The property "El Deheson del Encinar" had a most curious history, one that in Spain alone would have been possible.

Two hundred and fifty or more years ago, the King of those days borrowed a large sum of money from the Duke of Frías. He gave for his security the lands of the Deheson del Encinar, in the province of Toledo, close to the boundary of Estremadura. Nine miles or so away was situated the castle of Oropesa, an ancestral seat of the Frías family, on a high rock dominating the town of the same name, of which the family were overlords.

The bargain was that the Frías family should own the lands until the debt was paid. These lands were owned or claimed by five small townships, who from the first protested that their rights had been infringed.

Time passed and the Frías family treated the property as their own, drawing the rents, putting in tenants of their own, and building houses for them, sinking wells, and planting what had practically been waste land with olives, cork trees, and with oaks. It became valuable and the five townships went to the courts alleging that the money had been long ago repaid, but taking no notice of the improvements that the family had made.

Justice in those days was not a speedy matter with the Spaniards. It was so leaden-footed that it became a byword, crystallised in the "pawky" sayings: "Paper and ink and little justice," and "Justice if you like, but not in my house." In the outer world the phrase, "May death come to me from Spain," was a proof of the national deliberation in affairs. Sometimes the Courts decided for the towns and sometimes for the family, according to the greater or the lesser influence the contending parties brought to bear. In either case, the loser instantly appealed, and so the thing went on, a perfect instance of the "ganging plea" so dear to Scottish as well as Spanish justice in the great days of old.

Sometimes the matter was allowed to rest for years, but naturally such a gold-mine for the lawyers in Madrid was not permitted to remain long derelict.

The Frías family had never had a house on the estate.

Either from prudence, a virtue that few of them possessed, or because they had houses or estates all over Spain, or perhaps because they never visited El Deheson except to shoot, they had but seldom made, in Spanish legal phrase, "an act of presence."

Nine miles from Oropesa, and three miles from the nearest made road, the property was approached by a sandy track that ran through oak woods, passing a considerable stream, just where a little chapel known as El Cristo stood. In summer, the water hardly came up to a horse's knees, and as there was a bottom of hard sand, a carriage or a motor-car could pass it easily. In winter, it was quite another matter, and could be crossed, when it was practicable, only on horseback or in a bullock-cart. At times it was a foaming torrent impossible to cross, and then El Deheson was cut off from the outer world, except by a long detour, for several days. Then the track ran through more wood, and crossed another stream, but smaller than the first, and finally ended quite suddenly in a little clearing, in which stood the house, a long, low, one-storey building, such as a child draws on a slate. All through the woods, silent, deserted, and unearthly-looking after dark, when great moths sailed about and bats flew screaming through the trees, the underwood seemed all alive, just as it does in a primeval forest when night falls and the nocturnal animals set out upon their rounds. Rabbits ran scuttling across the sandy track, hares loped gracefully before the carriage, or the car, dazzled by the lights. Foxes peeped out or barked like jackals in the underwood. Now and then the mewling of a wild cat or a lynx, or an owl's hooting, broke the stillness of the night.

All was so desolate and wild, silent and melancholy under the beams of the Castilian moon that the road might have led to a ranch in Mexico, in the recesses of La Sierra Madre or the Bolson de Mápimi.

In daylight, the house stood stark, surrounded by a few old oaks, without a garden, planted shrubs or anything to

soften off the hardness of the Castilian landscape. The fields were not enclosed, but wheat was planted over a vast extent of ground, between the cork trees and the oaks. A stream whose high banks was fringed heavily with willows, ran close to the house. Taking advantage of the cover, in the winter, wolves made their way down from the mountains in their nocturnal raids.

A fence of strong wire-netting, twelve feet at least in height, kept them off from the house. In winter, especially when snow was on the ground, they came and howled outside the barrier, and were answered by the dogs either through terror or by affinity of race. Even in summer they were heard occasionally. Their melancholy, long-drawn-out howl once heard, never to be forgotten, that seems to chill the marrow of the bones, especially when heard alone, far off from houses, with your horse trembling underneath you, was quite in keeping with the wildness of the place.

Grey olive trees and greyer oaks grew out of the red soil. Only the cork trees, when their bark had been stripped off, leaving a bright, red-looking wound, gave a note of colour standing out vividly in the keen atmosphere of the high Castilian plain.

Some ten miles off La Sierra de Gredos stood out as starkly from the steppe as the Rock of Gibraltar juts up from the sea. Its serrated peaks, unearthly-looking as the mountains of the moon, grey and forbidding in the early morning, at sunset, when the sun's declining rays lighted them up before it set, were a great mass of opaline, or jade, and of rose quartz, irradiating a hundred shades of colour like an old crystal chandelier. In its recesses wandered still the Capra Hispánica, deer, lynxes, wild cats, an occasional bear, together with innumerable wolves.

The whole estate, overrun with rabbits, hares, with flocks of partridges, and bands of wild duck in the winter, was a sportsman's paradise.

In it perhaps the owner passed the last year of his life, if

not exactly happily, yet to a great extent absolved from care.

His wife and daughter lived in England, and though he never spoke of them without respect and loved them as the poet loved Cynara, faithfully, in his own fashion, he seldom saw them, or at the best on a brief run to Paris or Madrid.

All his dependants loved and imposed upon him to the best of their ability. His friends, and almost every woman, called him Dino, and so he lived much as Don Quixote lived, with a thin horse, plenty of equally thin greyhounds, and for all I know a brace of ferrets, as bold as those owned by the Manchegan knight.

In fact, a veritable "Hidalgo de Gotera," that is, a nobleman with a leaky house. Always in want of money, for though the rents of his two properties were not contemptible, Madrid and its temptations were as fatal to his purse as had been the town of Ibo whilst he lived in Africa.

His guards—for in his time all Spanish gentlemen had guards on their estates, who rode about, looked after poachers frequently standing in with them, pretended to protect the house at night, which they did sleeping comfortably in their own cottages—all swore by him.

A curious set they were, dressed in green corduroy, with a broad baldric, bearing a brass plate embossed with the Frías arms, crossing their chests, short jackets, and brown gaiters and *alpargatas* on their feet. They all rode mares, as they explained, on account of the produce, and carried some sort of gun fastened to their dilapidated Jerezano saddles.

The chief of them, one Nicolás, a tall, athletic man, and first-class rider, had been a sergeant in the Cuban wars. Courteous and affable he was a rogue in grain, but still in his own way was faithful to the Duke, singing his praises upon all occasions, respecting though invariably cheating him, when opportunity occurred.

The second was a bird of quite another feather, by name Ignacio. Honest and taciturn, just as good a horseman as was Nicolás, and a far better shot, his fellows all respected though

they feared him, for it was known that in his youth he had killed someone or another, and escaped going either to Ceuta or to El Peñón de la Gomera, in penal servitude, but by a miracle.

The other two were colourless, and they with one Manuel, a nondescript, whose duties were to go to Oropesa once a day upon his donkey to bring the letters and to collect the news, made up "the guard." These duties, generally, took him nearly all the day, and he returned at nightfall full of excuses for unavoidable delays. Either his donkey had cast a shoe, the train was late, or there were rumours that "bad people" had been seen upon the road, and he had waited to return till he had company. Modesta, helped by a gypsy-looking, untidy girl, ran the house, with one of the guards' wives to do the cooking, serving up thick country soups, stews, seasoned with saffron, and, strange as it may seem, digestible.

Frías, like most Spaniards of his rank, knew and appreciated good cooking, having lived much in Paris, but, like them, was too indolent to bother, or perhaps in his heart despised those who did, and ate all that was set before him without a comment, washing it down with the coarse country wine, almost as strong as brandy, and as intoxicating.

How long this sort of life might have gone on only God knows, and He, as say the Arabs, never tells, so that it does not matter much whether He knows or not, as we are none the wiser for His knowledge.

Had he lived longer, most likely he would have fallen into poverty, for he still gambled wildly on his visits to Madrid, kept no accounts, and went on generally as if Golconda had been his in tail settled on him and his heirs male.

He kept his looks to the last day he lived, proving the truth of the old Spanish saw: "Figure and genius to the grave."

Always on horseback in all weathers, after long bouts of dissipation in Madrid, one day your damned bronchitis took him, after a common cold.

This, in the keen air of the Castilian uplands, turned to pneumonia. His wild life, joined to the hardships of his nine years in Africa, had broken down a constitution that had been made of iron.

Helped by the gypsy girl, and assisted by an ill country doctor, Modesta tended him up to the last, perhaps with affection, but certainly with a fidelity that in itself was her reward.

If on the night he died the wolves howled in the woods around the house, nothing could have been a more fitting threnody.

A BLESSING

A FLOCK of goats lay on the rocky hill, their parti-coloured backs looking like stones amongst the scrub of lentisk and low palm. The noon-day sun had made them drowsy, even the whirring of a dragon-fly as it passed like a humming-bird, barely made them raise their heads. Below the hill spread out the bay, blue, calm, and looking almost artificial, or as if drawn by an indifferent painter, it was so conventional, with its white waves breaking upon a pebbly beach in a long, soothing swish. At one end of the bay rose the white town, surrounded by a ruined wall. The houses mounted up the hill in steps, flat-topped, and painted a pale pink or a metallic blue. One or two slender towers and a few palm-trees stood up here and there. No smoke defiled the atmosphere, and thus the town looked empty and unreal. So might Pompeii have appeared had it been left deserted and not overwhelmed. About the middle of the bay two or three fishing-boats lay becalmed their high lateens sticking up straight, just as the bar of an old Arab draw-well, with its tall arm and heavy stone tied to its butt with an esparto rope, sticks up on a brown plain. A long white line, fleecy and sparkling in the sun, showed where a tide-rip crossed the straits, although so still was everything it might have been but painted by the inferior draftsman that had drawn the sea. The other arm of land that formed the bay was high and rocky, and was crowned by an old watch-tower standing on a cliff. Villages, shown by their cactus hedges, which cut them into squares like a vast chess-board, with here and there a round white dome that marked a saint's house springing up like a mushroom in a field, were almost indistinguishable from the scrub.

Sea, land, and hills, the patches of dark bush, the grove of

fig-trees round the crumbling fort, in which the cannon all lay prone beside their carriages . . . the end of war is peace . . . were bathed in a white light, which cast black shadows on the sand. All was so quiet that you could almost hear the growth of plants, and the faint, twittering notes of the goatherd's pipe, cut from a green cane, seemed to fill all the air. A little sandy river ran beneath the fort.

Some ragged cattle, and thin mares with their feet hobbled with a palmetto cord, stood about listlessly. A knot of camels grazed on the sparse and wiry grass. Storks chattered on the thatched roofs of the village by the salt-pans, and the remains of an old Roman port still stood up stoutly after ten centuries of pillage and decay. All was so peaceful and so primitive that if Theocritus had come to life again, he could not but have taken up his pen to write another idyll, to prove the golden age had never passed away.

All round the hillock, upon which, amongst palmetto bushes and the rocks, the goats were lying, ran like a lake a tract of sandy ground, white with the efflorescence of the salt that flowed out from the pans. On it the grass grew sparely, and little flowers, pink and procumbent, appeared between its stalks. The guardian of the flock lay with his head under a clump of dwarfish palm, his two brown legs, tanned with the sun that he had fought with all his life and that his ancestors brought in their blood from the far Yemen or the Hejáz, looked like the roots of the thick bushes that the sand had left uncovered at his feet. His dark and liquid eyes were not unlike those of the goats he herded, and as he played upon his pipe a strange wild air, the intervals so wild and so uncertain that a bird might have been deceived by it and flown about him, thinking that one of its own kind was in distress, a little kid, white but for a spot or two about its nose, nestled up to his side. Now and again he patted it, and the two seemed but a little separated from one another, in nature or degree.

As the day wore on the goats slowly began to rise and

feed; the boy got up, leaving a little hollow in the sand where he had lain by the palmettos, and, drawing out his sling, lazily sent a stone or two whistling towards the goats. As the stones struck the ground near to the animals they drew their feet together in a bunch, jumped to one side, and then, after stretching out into a long line, dispersed about the stones to graze. A flight of cranes, looking like aerial camels, passed overhead, their shrill, harsh cries lost in the stillness of the air. Nature awoke after its midday torpor, and in the valley the lean Arab mares, dragging their hobbled feet slowly along or rising in a sort of stifled rear, turned their heads towards the breeze as they began to feed. Their foals, that had lain looking as if half dead, rose to their feet, and, shaking off the sand, whinnied and trotted after them, their stilt-like legs giving them an air of those strange animals drawn by the cave-dwellers upon the rocks.

Slowly the little river filled. Stones on the sandy flat were covered as if by magic by the incoming tide, so imperceptibly that you could no more mark the rising of the flood than follow the slow movement of the hands of a cathedral clock as they eat time before your eyes. The droning of the insects ceased, save for the sharp metallic chirp of crickets and caravans of asses and of mules that had arrived too late to pass the river were turned back to the grass to feed or struck a winding path between high bushes to seek another ford. As the goats fed, the small, white kid followed the little goatherd like a dog, stopping to eat, then trotted up to him to rub its nose against his legs. He took its innocent caresses just as a man acknowledges those of his dog, as if they were his due; but at the same time something he prides himself upon as testifying to his worth. All day the goats fed happily amongst the stones or browsed upon the thorns. Sometimes they ran along the trunk of a fallen tree like tight-rope dancers, to reach its branches, or bounding on a rock, stood for an instant motionless, and leaping down again, began again to feed, with just the air that a man wears upon his face after

some sudden foolish action into which he is betrayed.

By slow degrees the sun began to slant, gilding the mosque towers in the town across the bay, painting the sails of fishing-boats and throwing ever-lengthening shadows on the sand. The massive walls of the deserted Roman port turned to a dullish-yellow in its rays, and the far-off mountains above Tetuán seemed to draw nearer as the light haze raised by the heat was slowly dissipated. As the sun sank, tribesmen returning from the town, all dressed in white as if they had been shrouded for their own burial, came trooping homewards, crossing the river seated on their mules. One would go forward with his white garments tucked up, sounding the water with a stick. Then came the caravan, some mounted, some on foot, the women passing with their garments held up round their necks, but with their faces all veiled chastely, for, as the Arabs say, the devil enters at the mouth. The mules' and ponies' feet, in the swift, running walk that they affect, seemed not to leave the ground, and yet the riders, rocked by the motion, swayed in their seats just as a man does on a camel, as it slides through the sand. They brushed through beds of the palmettos making a noise as of the opening of a fan. Passing the little plain, in the midst of which stood the steep hillock where the goats had lain amongst the stones, they disappeared down the rough path that crossed a stream, and reappeared upon the bush-clad hill, looking like a flock of sheep in their white clothes, then faded out of sight.

Sometimes, instead of these white friar-like figures, a knot of men from the far highlands, dressed in their short brown cloaks, their scarlet flannel gun-cases wound turban-like about their heads, passed at a swinging trot. They bore their rifles in their hands and danced along like fauns, occasionally firing a shot or two or simulating a hill-fight, whirling their guns about and uttering wild cries. As they passed on their way, either on foot or mounted, the little flock of goats, with that pathetic trust in man that Eastern animals seem to have

above all others of their kind, scarcely avoided them, and now and then a pony's tail seemed to be whisked to brush the flies off, it passed so near their heads.

Their little shepherd stood playing on his reed or plaiting a palmetto cord, his two brown feet, with their prehensile toes holding the ground just as a monkey's paws curve around a rope. At last all the returning village folk had gone, the sun sank lower, and the boy, gathering his flocks together, walked towards home in front of them piping on his reed.

In a long line they followed, the kids occasionally stopping to browse upon the cytisus and the lentiscus bushes. The milk-white kid followed the closest at his heels. The little river, from which the tide had now retired, was almost empty, and the flock passed it with the water scarcely up to their knees. They threaded through the open gateway of the old Roman port, passed by the salt-pans and drew near to an Arab village, built of reeds and thatched with thistle stalks, giving the huts the look as of the nest of some gigantic bird. Upon a little plot of grass outside the village sat several elders, men of grave mien, bearded and formal in their manners, who by their appearance should have been discoursing on religion, the unity of God or on his attributes; but who were probably talking about the price of grain. An air of peace, such as one fancies reigned on earth when Boaz courted Ruth, hung over everything. Girls lingered at the well and talked, and then, their slender water-jars filled up, and with a tuft of tender canes or reeds floating on the top, went homeward, stepping like deer upon their naked feet and swaying with their load. Bells tinkled on the kine, and now and then a homing stork circled about the huts and dropped into its nest.

Over the straits was stealing by degrees a greenish light that made the hills in Spain still more intensely vivid, flushed as they were with red. The fishing-boats began to look mysterious as the day faded, and the town to stand out white and unnatural-looking, like a dead city in the moon. As the

flock and its shepherd reached the village one of the grave and bearded men arose. He stopped the boy, and speaking to him in sonorous Arabic said something, and the boy, reaching out a lean brown hand, caught the white kid and held it for a moment. The village elder felt its neck, and then drawing out a knife, after a pious "In the name of God," rapidly cut its throat. The kid uttered a little cry, and from its neck the blood spurted out in a stream upon the grass. One little jet fell on the boy's brown foot, and as he watched the last contortions of the dying kid with interest, but without feeling for his playmate's loss, dried in the warm sea breeze and looked as if a vein had been exposed.

Slowly the kid's head sank and coggled limply, and with a heaving motion of its flanks its life was finished. Mystery of mysteries! Still the same air of peace hung over everything, and as the flock passed to its pen the call to prayer was wafted up to heaven from the village mosque, fitful and quavering.

THE IMPENITENT THIEF

DIMAS or Gestas, Gestas or Dimas, who can say which, when even monkish legends disagree?

At any rate, one of the two died game.

Passion o' me, I hate your penitents.

Live out your life: drink, women, dice, murder, adultery, meanness, oppression, snobbery (by which sin the English fall); be lavish of others' money, and get thereby a name for generosity. Bow down to wealth alone, discerning talent, beauty, humour (the most pathetic of all qualities), wit, courage and pathos, only in gilded fools.

Keep on whilst still digestion waits on appetite, and at the first advance of age, at the first tinge of gout, sciatica, at the first wrinkle, crow's-foot, when the hair grows thin upon the temples, the knees get "schaucle," when the fresh horse seems wild, the jolting of the express crossing the facing points makes you contract your muscles, and when all life seems to grow flat, stale and unprofitable outside the library, forsake your former naughty life, and straight turn traitor on your friends, ideas, beliefs and prejudices, and stand confessed apostate to yourself. For the mere bettering of your spiritual fortunes leaves you a turncoat still. It is mean, unreasonable, and shows a caitiff spirit, or impaired intellect in the poor penitent who, to save his paltry soul, denies his life.

Dimas or Gestas, whiche'er it was, no doubt some unambitious oriental thief, a misappropriator of some poor bag of almonds, sack of grain, bundle of canes, some frail of fruit, camel's-hair picket rope, or other too well considered trifle, the theft of which the economic state of Eastern lands makes capital, had given him brevet rank amongst the world's most honoured criminals, set up on high to testify that human

nature, even beside a coward and a God, is still supreme.

Perhaps again some sordid knave, whipped from the markets, an eye put out, finger lopped off, nose slit, ears cropped, and hoisted up to starve upon his cross as an example of the folly of the law, crassness of reason, to appease the terrors of the rich, or, perhaps, but to exemplify that Rome had a far-reaching arm, thick head, and owned a conscience like to that enjoyed by Rome's successor in the empire of the world.

Dimas or Gestas, perhaps some cattle thief from the Hauran, some tribesman sent for judgment to Jerusalem, black-bearded, olive in colour, his limbs cast like an Arab's, or a Kioway's twisted in agony, his whole frame racked with pain, his brain confused, but yet feeling, somehow, in some vague way, that he, too, suffered for humanity to the full as much as did his great companion, who to him, of course, was but a Jewish Thaumaturgist, as his adjuration, "If thou be the Son of God, save us and thyself," so plainly shows.

And still, perhaps, impenitent Gestas (or Dimas) was the most human of the three, a thief, and not ashamed of having exercised his trade. How much more dignified than some cold-hearted scoundrel who, as solicitor, banker or confidential agent, swindles for years, and in the dock recants, and calls upon his God to pardon him, either because he is a cur at heart, or else because he knows the public always feels tenderly towards a cheat, having, perhaps, a fellow-feeling, and being therefore kind.

I like the story of the Indian who, finding his birch canoe caught in the current, and drifting hopelessly towards Niagara, ceased all his paddling when he found his efforts vain, lighted his pipe, and went in on a lone hand, peacefully smoking, as the spectators watched him through their opera glasses.

And so perhaps this stony-hearted knave, whom foolish painters, bereft of all imagination, have delighted to revile in paint, making him villainous in face, humpbacked, blind

of one eye, and of all them drawing the wretched man with devils waiting for his poor pain-racked soul, as if the cross was not a hell enough for any act of man, may have repented (of his poor unsuccessful villainies) long years ago. He may have found no opportunity, and being caught red-handed and condemned to death, made up his mind to cease his useless paddling, and die after the fashion he had lived. This may have been, and yet, perhaps again, this tribesman, as the night stole on the flowers, the waters and the stones, all sleeping, reckoned up his life, saw nothing to repent of, and thought the cross but one injustice more. As gradually hope left his weakening body, he may have thought upon the folded sheep, the oxen in their stalls, the camels resting on their hardened knees, men sleeping wrapped up in their haiks beneath the trees, or at the foot of walls, mere mummies rolled in white rags, under the moonbeams and the keen rays of El Sohail. No one awake except himself and the two figures on his either hand, during the intolerable agony of the long hours, when jackals howl, hyenas grunt, and as, from Golgotha, Jerusalem looked like a city of the dead, all hushed except the rustling of the palm trees in the breeze. Then may his thoughts have wandered to his duar on the plains, and in his tent he may have seen his wives, and heard them moan, heard his horse straining on his picket rope and stamping, and wept, but silently, so that his fellow sufferers should not see his tears.

And so the night wore on, till the tenth hour, and what amazed him most was the continual plaint of Dimas (or of Gestas) and his appeals for mercy, so that at last, filled with contempt and sick with pain, he turned and cursed him in his rage.

Repentance, retrospection and remorse, the furies which beset mankind, making them sure of nothing; conscious of actions, feeling they are eternal, and that no miracle can wipe them out. They know they forge and carry their own hell about with them, too weak to sin and fear not, and too

irrational not to think a minute of repentance can blot out the actions of a life.

Remorse and retrospection and regret; what need to conjure up a devil or to invent a place of torment, when these three were ready to our souls. Born in the weakness (or the goodness) of ourselves, never to leave us all our lives; bone of our bone and fibre of our hearts; man's own invention; nature's revenge for all the outrages we heap upon her; reason's despair, and sweet religion's eagerest advocates; what greater evils have we in the whole pack with which we live, than these three devils, called repentance, retrospection and regret?

But still the penitent upon the other side was human too. Most likely not less wicked in his futile villainy than his brother, whom history has gone out to vilify and to hold up as execrable, because he could not recognize a god in him he saw, even as he himself, in pain, in tears, and as it seemed, least fit to bear his suffering, of the three. Repentance is a sort of fire insurance, hedging on what you will—an endeavour to be all things to all men and to all gods.

Humanity repentant shows itself *en déshabillé*, with the smug mask of virtue clear stripped off, the visor of consistency drawn up, and the whole entity in its most favourite Janus attitude, looking both ways at once. The penitent on the right hand, whom painters have set forth, a fair young man, with curly golden hair, well rounded limbs, tears of contrition streaming from his eyes, with angels hovering around his head to carry off his soul, whom writers have held up for generations as a bright instance of redeeming faith duly rewarded at the last, was to the outward faithless eye much as his brother thief.

Perhaps he was some camel driver, who, entrusted with a bag of gold, took it and came into Jerusalem showing some self-inflicted wounds, and called upon Jehovah or Allah to witness that he had received them guarding the money against thieves. That which he said upon the cross he may have

thought was true, and yet men not infrequently die, as they have lived, with lies upon their lips. He may have seen that in his fellow sufferer which compelled respect, or yet again he may have, in his agony, defied the Jews by testifying that the hated one was king. All things are possible to him who has no faith.

So, when the night grew misty towards dawn, and the white eastern mist crept up, shrouding the sufferers and blotting out their forms, the Roman soldiers keeping watch, had they looked up, could not have said which of the thieves was Gestas and which Dimas, had they not known the side on which their crosses stood.

FAITH

"I TOLD you," said Hamed-el-Angeri, "of how once on a time all beasts could speak, and of how Allah, in his might, and for his glory, and no doubt for some wise cause, rendered them dumb, or at least caused them to lose their Arabic. Now will I tell you of a legend of the Praised One who sleepeth in Medina, and whom alone Allah has pardoned of all men."

He paused, and the hot sun streamed through the branches of the carob tree, under whose shade we sat upon a rug, during the hottest hours, and threw his shadow on the sandy soil, drawing him, long of limb, and lithe of pose, like John the Baptist revealed by Donatello in red clay.

Our horses hung their heads, and from the plain a mist of heat arose, dancing and shivering in the air, as the flame dances waveringly from a broken gas-pipe lighted by workmen in a street. Grasshoppers twittered, raising their pandean pipe of praise to Allah for his heat, and now and then a locust whirred across the sky, falling again into the hard dry grass, just as a flying-fish falls out of sight into the sea. "They say," Hamed again began, "that in Medina, or in Mecca, in the blessed days when God spake to his Prophet, and he composed his book, making his laws, and laying down his rules of conduct for men's lives, that many wondered that no nook or corner in all Paradise was set apart for those who bore us, or whose milk we sucked, when they had passed their prime."

Besides the Perfect Four, women there were who with the light that Allah gave them, strove to be faithful, just, and loving, and to do their duty as it seemed to them, throughout their lives.

One there was, Rahma, a widow, who had borne four stalwart sons, all slain in battle, and who, since their deaths, had kept herself in honour and repute, labouring all day with distaff and with loom.

Seated in a lost dúar in the hills, she marvelled much that the wise son of Ámina, he to whom the word of God had been vouchsafed, and who himself had owed his fortune to a woman, could be unjust. Long did she ponder in her hut beyond Medina, and at last resolved to take her ass, and set forth, even to Mecca, and there speak with God's messenger, and hear from him the why and wherefore of the case. She set her house in order, leaving directions to the boy who watched her goats to tend them diligently, and then upon the lucky day of all the week, that Friday upon which the faithful all assemble to give praise, she took her way.

The people of the village thought her mad, as men in every age have always thought all those demented who have determined upon any course which has not entered into their own dull brains. Wrinkled and withered like a mummy, draped in her shroud-like haik, she sat upon her ass. A bag of dates, with one of barley, and a small water-skin her luggage, and in her heart that foolish, generous, undoubting Arab faith, powerful enough to move the most stupendous mountain chain of facts which weigh down European souls, she journeyed on.

Rising before the dawn, in the cold chill of desert nights, she fed the beast from her small store of corn, shivering and waiting for the sun to warm the world. Then, as the first faint flush of pink made palm trees look like ghosts and half revealed the mountain tops floating above a sea of mist, she turned towards the town, wherein he dwelt who denied Paradise to all but girls, and prayed. Then, drawing out her bag of dates, she ate, with the content of those to whom both appetite and food are not perennial gifts.

As the day broke, and the fierce sun rose, as it seemed with his full power, the enemy of those who travel in those wilds,

she clambered stiffly to her seat on her straw pillion, and with a suddra thorn urged on her ass to a fast stumbling walk, his feet seeming but scarce to leave the ground as he bent forward his meek head as if he bore the sins of all mankind upon his back.

The dew lay thickly on the scant mimosa scrub and camel-thorn, bringing out aromatic odours, and filling the interstices of spiders' webs as snow fills up the skeletons of leaves. The colocynths growing between the stones seemed frosted with the moisture of the dawn, and for a brief half-hour nature was cool, and the sun shone in vain. Then, as by magic, all the dew disappeared, and the fierce sunlight heated the stones, and turned the sand to fire.

Green lizards, with kaleidoscopic tints, squattered across the track, and hairy spiders waddled in and out the stones. Scorpions and centipedes revived, and prowled about like sharks or tigers looking for their prey, whilst beetles, rolling balls of camels' dung, strove to as little purpose as do men, who, struggling in the dung of business, pass their lives, like beetles, with their eyes fixed upon the ground.

As the sun gradually gained strength, the pilgrim drew her tattered haik about her face, and sat, a bundle of white rags, head crouched on her breast and motionless, except the hand holding the reins, which half mechanically moved up and down, as she urged on the ass into a shuffling trot.

The hot hours caught her under a solitary palm tree, by a half-stagnant stream, in which great tortoises put up their heads, and then sank out of sight as noiselessly as they had risen, leaving a trail of bubbles on the slimy pool. Some red flamingos lazily took flight, and then with outstretched wings descended further off, and stood expectant, patient as fishers, and wrapt in contemplation during the mysteries of their gentle craft.

Then the full silence of the desert noontide fell upon the scene, as the old woman, after having tied her ass's feet with a thin goat's-hair cord, sat down to rest. Long did

she listen to her ass munching his scanty feed of corn, and then the cricket's chirp and the faint rustling of the lone palm-trees' leaves lulled her to sleep.

Slumbering, she dreamed of her past life—for dreams are but the shadow of the past, reflected on the mirror of the brain—and saw herself, a girl, watching her goats, happy to lie beneath a bush all day, eating her bread dipped in the brook at noon, and playing on a reed; then, evening come, driving her charges home, to sleep on the hard ground upon a sheepskin, in the corner of the tent. She saw herself a maiden, not wondering overmuch at the new view of life which age had brought, accepting in the same way as did her goats, that she too must come under the law of nature, and in pain bear sons. Next, marriage, with its brief feasting, an eternal round of grinding corn, broken alone by childbirth once a year, during the period of her youth. Then came the one brief day of joy since she kept goats a child upon the hills, the morning when she bore a son, one who would be a man, and ride, and fill his father's place upon the earth.

She saw her sons grow up, her husband die, and then her children follow him, herself once more alone, and keeping goats upon the hill, only brown, bent and wrinkled, instead of round, upright and rosy, as when she was a child. Still, with the resignation of her race, a resignation as of rocks to rain, she did not murmur, but took it all just as her goats bore all things, yielding their necks, almost, as it were, cheerfully, to her blunt knife, upon the rare occasions when she found herself constrained to kill one for her food.

Waking and dozing, she passed through the hottest hours when even palm trees drooped, and the tired earth appears to groan under the fury of the sun.

Then rising up refreshed, she led her ass to water at the stream, watching him drink amongst the stones, whitened with the salt scum, which in dry seasons floats upon all rivers in that land.

Mounting she struck into the sandy deep-worn track

which, fringed with feathery tamarisks, led out into the plain. Like a faint cloud on the horizon rose the white city where the Prophet dwelt, and as the ass shuffled along, travellers from many paths passed by, and the road grew plainer as she advanced upon her way.

Horsemen, seated high above their horses in their chair saddles, ambled along, their spears held sloping backwards or trailing in the dust. Meeting each other on the way, they whirled and charged, drawing up short when near and going through the evolutions of the "Jerid," and then with a brief "Peace," again becoming grave and silent, they ambled on, their straight sharp spurs pressed to their horses' sides.

Camels with bales of goods, covered with sheepskin or with striped cloth, swayed onward in long lines, their heads moving alternately about, as if they were engaged in some strange dance. Asses, with piles of brushwood covering them to their ears, slid past like animated haystacks, and men on foot veiled to the eyes, barefooted, with their slippers in their hands, or wearing sandals, tramped along the road. Pack-mules, with bundles of chopped straw packed hard in nets, or carrying loads of fresh-cut barley or of grass, passed by, their riders sitting sideways on the loads, or, running at their tails with one hand on their quarters, seemed to push on their beasts, as with the curses, without which no mule will move, they whiled away the time. A fine red dust enveloped everything as in a sand storm, turning burnouses and haiks brown, and caking thickly on the sweaty faces of the men.

Nearing the city gates the crush grew thicker, till at last a constant stream of people blocked the way, jostling and pushing, but good-humouredly, after the way of those to whom time is the chiefest property they own.

Dark rose the crenellated walls, and the white gate made a strange blot of light in the surrounding brown of plain and roads and mud-built houses of the town.

Entering upon the cobbled causeway, she passed through the gate, and in a corner, squatting on the ground, saw the

scribes writing, the spearmen lounging in the twisted passage with their spears stacked against the wall. Then the great rush of travellers bore her as on a wave into the precincts of the town.

She rode by heaps of rubbish, on which lay chickens and dead dogs, with scraps of leather, camel's bones, and all the jetsam of a hundred years, burned by the sun till they became innocuous, but yet sending out odours which are indeed the very perfumes of Araby the blest.

Huts made of canes, near which grew castor-oil plants, fringed the edge of the high dunghill of the town, and round it curs, lean, mangy, and as wild as jackals, slept with a bloodshot eye half open, ready to rush and bark at anyone who ventured to infringe upon the limits of their sphere of influence.

She passed the sandy horse-market, where auctioneers, standing up in their stirrups with a switch between their teeth, circled and wheeled their horses as a seagull turns upon the wing, or, starting them full speed, stopped them with open mouth and foam-flecked bit, turned suddenly to statues, just at the feet of the impassive bystanders, who showed their admiration but by a guttural "Wah," or gravely interjected "Allah," as they endeavoured to press home some lie, too gross to pass upon its merits, even in that bright atmosphere of truth which in all lands encompasses the horse.

A second gate she passed, in which more tribesmen lounged, their horses hobbled, and themselves stretched out on mats, and the tired pilgrim found herself in a long cobbled street, on which her ass skated and slipped about, being accustomed to the desert sands. In it the dyers plied their craft, their arms stained blue or red, as they plunged hanks of wool into their vats, from which a thick dark steam rose, filling the air with vapours as from a solfatara, or such as rises from those islands in the west, known to those daring men "who ride that huge unwieldy beast, the sea, like fools,

trembling upon its waves in hollow logs," and braving death upon that element which Allah has not given to his faithful to subdue. Smiths and artificers in brass and those who ply the bellows, sweating and keeping up a coil, unfit for council, but by whose labour and the wasting of whose frames cities are rendered stable, and states who cherish them set their foundations like wise builders on a rock, she passed.

Stopping, the pilgrim asked from a white-bearded man where in the city did the Prophet sit, and if the faithful, even the faithful such as she, had easy access to the person of the man whom God had chosen as his vicegerent upon earth.

Stroking his beard, the elder made reply: "Praise be to God, the One, our Lord Mohammed keeps no state. He sits within the mosque which we of Mecca call Masjida n'Nabi, with his companions, talking and teaching, and at times is silent, as his friends think, communing with the Lord. All can approach him, and if thou hast anything to ask, tether thine ass at the mosque door and go in boldly, and thou wilt be received."

The pilgrim gave "the Peace," and passed along in the dense crowd, in which camels and mules, with horses, negroes tribesmen, sellers of sweetmeats, beggars, and water-carriers, all swelled the press.

Again she entered into streets, streets, and more streets. She threaded through bazaars where saddle-makers wrought, bending the camel's shoulder-bones to form the trees, and stretching unshrunk mare's hide over all. Crouched in their booths they sat like josses in a Chinese temple, sewing elaborate patterns, plaiting stirrup leathers, and cutting out long Arab reins which dangle almost to the ground. Before their booths stood wild-eyed Bedouins, their hair worn long and greased with mutton fat till it shone glossy as a raven's wing. They chaffered long for everything they bought. Spurs, reins, or saddle-cloths were all important to them, therefore they took each piece up separately, appraised it to

its disadvantage, and often made pretence to go away, calling down maledictions on the head of him who for his goods wished to be paid in life's blood of the poor. Yet they returned, and, after much expenditure of eloquence, bore off their purchase, as if they feared that robbers would deprive them of their prize, hiding it cautiously under the folds of their brown goat's-hair cloaks, or stowed in the recesses of their saddle-bags.

A smell of spices showed the tired wanderer that she approached the Kaiseria, wherein dwell those who deal in saffron, pepper, anise, and cummin, assafœtida, cloves, nutmegs, cinnamon, sugar and all the merchandise which is brought over sea by ship to Yembo, and then conveyed to Mecca and Medina upon camels' backs.

Stopping an instant where a Jaui had his wares displayed, she bought an ounce of semsin, knowing Abdallah's son had three things specially in which he took delight, women, scents, and meat, but not knowing that of the first two, as his wife Ayesha said in years to come, he had his fill, but never of the third. The Kaiseria left behind, she felt her heart beat as she neared the mosque.

Simple it stood on a bare space of sand, all made of palm-trees hewn foursquare, the walls of cane and of mud, the roof of palm leaves over the mihrab—simple and only seven cubits high, and yet a fane in which the pæan to the God of Battles echoed so loudly that its last blast was heard in Aquitaine, in farthest Hind, Irac, in China, and by the marshy shores of the Lake Chad.

As she drew near the mosque not knowing (as a woman) how to pray, she yet continued muttering something which, whilst no doubt strengthening her soul, was to the full as acceptable to the One God as it were framed after the strictest canon of the Moslem law. Then, sliding to the ground, she tied her ass's feet with a palmetto cord, and taking in her hand her ounce of semsin as an offering passed into the court.

Under the orange trees a marble fountain played, stained

here and there with time, murmuring its never-ending prayer, gladdening the souls of men with its faint music, and serving as a drinking-place to countless birds, who, after drinking, washed, and then, flying back to the trees, chanted their praises to the giver of their lives.

A little while she lingered, and then, after the fashion of her race, which, desert born, cannot pass running water, even if they are being led to death, without a draught, she stopped and drank. Then, lifting up her eyes, she saw a group seated beneath a palm tree, and at once felt her eyes had been considered worthy to behold the man whom, of all men, his Maker in his life had pardoned and set His seal upon his shoulder as a memorial of His grace.

As she drew near she marked the Prophet, the Promised, the Blessed One, who in the middle of his friends sat silently as they discussed or prayed.

Of middle height he was and strongly made, his colour fair, his hair worn long and parted, neither exactly curling nor yet smooth, his beard well shaped and flecked with silver here and there, clipped close upon his upper lip; and about the whole man an air of neatness and of cleanliness. His dress was simple, for, hanging to the middle of his calf, appeared his undershirt, and over it he wore as it fell out upon that day, a fine striped mantle from the Yémen, which he wrapped round about him tightly after the fashion of a coat; his shoes, which lay beside him, were of the fashion of the Hadhramút, with thongs and clouted; his staff lay near to them, and as he spoke, he beat with his left hand upon the right, and often smiled so that his teeth appeared as white as hailstones, new fallen on the grass after an April storm.

Advancing to the group, the pilgrim gave "the Peace," and then tendering her offering, stood silent in the sight of all the company. Fear sealed her lips, and sweat ran down her cheeks as she gazed on the face of him to whom the Lord of Hosts had spoken, giving him power both to unloose and bind.

Gently he spoke, and lifting up his hand, said: "Mother, what is it you seek, and why this offering?"

Then courage came to her, and words which all the Arabs have at their command, and she poured forth her troubles, telling the prophet of her loneliness, her goats, her hut, of her lost husband and her sons all slain in battle, in the service of the Lord. She asked him why her sex was barred from Paradise, and if the prophet would exclude Ámina, she who bore him, from the regions of the blessed. With the direct and homely logic of her race, she pressed her claims.

Well did she set out woman's life, how she bore children in sore suffering, reared them in trouble and anxiety, moulded and formed their minds in childhood, as she had moulded and had formed their bodies in the womb.

When she had finished she stood silent, anxiously waiting a reply, whilst on the faces of the fellowship there came a look as if they too remembered those who in tents and dúars on the plains had nurtured them, but no one spoke, for the respect they bore to him who, simply clad as they, was yet superior to all created men.

Long did he muse, no doubt remembering Kadíja, and how she clave to him in evil and in good report, when all men scoffed, and then opening his lips he gave his judgment on the pilgrim's statement of the case.

"Allah," he said, "has willed it that no old woman enter Paradise, therefore depart, and go in peace, and trouble not the prophet of the Lord."

Tears rose to Rahma's eyes, and she stood turned to stone, and through the company there ran a murmur of compassion for her suffering. Then stretching out his hand, Mohammed smiled and said: "Mother, Allah has willed it as I declared to you, but as his power is infinite, at the last day, it may be he will make you young again, and you shall enter into the regions of the blessed, and sit beside the Perfect Ones, the four, who of all women have found favour in his sight."

He ceased, and opening the offered packet, took the

semsin in his hand, and eagerly inhaled the scent, and Rahma, having thanked him, stooped down and kissed the fringes of his striped Yemen mantle, then straightening herself as she had been a girl, passed through the courtyard, mounted on her ass and struck into the plain.

IT IS WRITTEN

ALL Tangier knew the Rubio, the fair-haired blind man, who sat upon the mounting-block outside the stables of the principal hotel. His bright red hair and bleared blue eyes, together with his freckled face, looking just like a newly scalded pig, had given him the name by which the Europeans knew him, although no doubt he was Mohammed, something or another, amongst his brethren in the faith.

He spoke indifferently well most European languages up to a point, and perfectly as far as blasphemy or as obscenity was concerned, and his quick ear enabled him as if by magic to ascertain the nationality of any European passer-by, if ever he had spoken to the man before, and to salute him in his mother-tongue.

All day he sat, amused and cheerful, in the sun. Half faun, half satyr, his blindness kept him from entire materialism, giving him sometimes a half-spiritual air, which possibly may have been but skin deep, and of the nature of the reflection of a sunset on a dunghill; or again, may possibly have been the true reflection of his soul as it peeped through the dunghill of the flesh.

As people passed along the road, their horses slithering and sliding on the sharp pitch of the paved road, which dips straight down from underneath the mounting-block of the hotel, between the tapia walls, over which bougainvilleas peep, down to the Soko Grande, El Rubio would hail them, as if he had been a dark lighthouse, set up to guide their steps.

Occasionally, but rarely, he mistook his mark, hailing some European lady with obscenity, or bawling to the English clergyman that he could tell him "where one fine girl live, not more than fifteen year"; but his contrition was so manifest, when he found his mistake, that no one bore him malice,

and he remained an institution of the place and a perpetual rent-charge on all passers-by.

By one of the strange contradictions which Nature seems to take delight in just to confound us, when after a few thousand years of study we think we know her ways, the Rubio had a love of horses which in him replaced the usual love of music of the blind. No one could hold two or three fighting stallions better, and few Moors in all the place were bolder riders—that is, on roads he knew. Along the steep and twisting path that leads towards Spartel he used to ride full speed and shouting "Balak" when he was sent upon a message or with a horse from town out to the villas on the hill. All those who knew him left him a free road, and if he met a herd of cattle or of sheep, the horse would pick his way through them, twisting and turning of his own accord, whilst his blind rider left the reins upon his neck and galloped furiously. In what dark lane or evil-smelling hole he lived no European knew. Always well dressed and clean, he lived apart both from the Moors and from the Europeans, and in a way from all humanity, passing his time, as does a lizard, in the sun and in the evening disappearing to his den. The missions of the various true faiths, Catholic, Presbyterian, and Anglican, had tackled him in vain. Whether it was that none of them had anything to offer which he thought better than the cheerful optimism with which he was endowed by nature to fight the darkness of the world he lived in, is difficult to say. Still, they had all been worsted; not that the subject of their spiritual blandishments could have been termed a strict Mohammedan, for he drank any kind of spirits that was presented to him by Christians, anxious perhaps to make him break the spirit, if they were impotent to move him in the letter of his law. Still though he sat with nothing seemingly reflected on the retina of his opaque and porcelain-coloured eyes, his interior vision was as keen or keener than that of other men. He never seemed a man apart, or cut off from his fellows, but had his place in life, just as throughout

the East the poorest and most miserable appear to have, not barred out from mankind by mere externals as are their brethren in the North, shut in the ice of charity, as bees are shut behind a plate of glass so that the rich may watch their movements in the hive.

Up from the Arab market over which he sat, as it were presiding in his darkness, just as God seems to sit, presiding blindly, over a world which either mocks Him, or is mocked at by Him, there came a breath of Eastern life, bearing a scent compounded of the acrid sweat of men, dried camel's dung, of mouldering charcoal fires, of spices, gunpowder, and of a thousand simples, all brought together by mere chance or fate, a sort of incense burned in his honour, and agreeable to his soul. It seemed to bring him life, and put him into touch with all he could not see, but yet could feel, almost as well as if he saw, just as did other men.

Sniffing it up, his nostrils would dilate, and then occasionally a shadow crossed his face, and as he ran his hands down the legs of the horse left in his charge, marking acutely any splint or spavin they might have, he used to mutter, half in a resigned, half in an irritated way, "Mektub," the sole profession of his faith that he was ever heard to make, for if a thing is written down by fate, it follows naturally that there is somebody who writes, if only foolishly. Whether the mystic phrase of resignation referred to his condition or to the possible splint upon the horse's leg, no one could tell, but as the shadow passed away, as quickly as it came, he soon fell back again into the half-resigned good humour of the blind, which, like the dancer's lithographic smile, seems quite involuntary.

Years melted into one another, and time sauntered by, just as it always must have sauntered in the town where hours are weeks, weeks months, and months whole years, and still the hum of animals and men rose from the Arab market, and still the shadows in the evening creeping on the sand seemed something tangible to the blind watcher on his stone. Not

that he cared for time, or even marked its flight, or would have cared to mark it, had it been pointed out to him, for life was pleasant, the springs of charity unfailing, wit ever present in his brain, and someone always had a horse to hold, to which he talked, as it stood blinking in the sun. His blindness did not seem to trouble him, and if he thought of it at all, he looked on it as part and parcel of the scheme of nature, against which it is impious to contend. Doctors had peered into his eyes with lenses, quarrelled with one another on their diagnoses of his case, and still the Rubio sat contented, questioning nothing, and enduring everything, sun, rain, wind, flies, and dust, as patiently as if he were a rock. Nothing was further from his thoughts than that he ever once again could see. Plainly, it had been written in the books of fate he should be blind, and so when European doctors talked to him of operations and the like, he smiled, not wishing to offend. and never doubting of their learning for had not one of them cured a relation of his own of intermittent fever by the use of some white magic powder when native doctors, after having burned him with a red-hot iron and made him take texts of the Koran steeped in water had ignominiously failed?

All that they said did not appeal to him for all of them were serious men who talked the matter over gravely and looked on him as something curious on which to exercise their skill. All might have gone on in the same old way and to this day the Rubio still sat upon his stone without a wish to see the horses that he held the sunlight falling white upon the towers or the red glare upon the Spanish coast at eventide, had not a German scientist appeared on the horizon of his life.

From the first day on which the Rubio held the doctor's horse a fellowship sprang up between them, not easy to explain. No single word of Arabic the doctor spoke, and all the German that the Rubio knew was either objurgatory or obscene, and yet the men were friends. Tall and uncouth and

with a beard that looked as if it never had been combed, his trousers short and frayed and with an inch or two of dirty sock showing between them and his shoes, dressed in a yellowish alpaca jacket, and a white solar topee lined with green, the doctor peered out on the world through neutral-tinted glasses, for his own eyes were weak.

Whether this weakness drew him to the blind, or if he liked to hear the Rubio's tales about the Europeans he had known, to all of whom he gave the worst of characters, calling them drunkards and hinting at dark vices which he averred they practised to a man—not that he for a moment believed a single word he uttered, but thought apparently his statements gave a piquancy to conversation—the doctor never said. Soon Tangier knew him for a character, and as he stumbled on his horse about the town, curing the Arabs of ophthalmia and gathering facts for the enormous book he said he meant to write upon North Africa, his reputation grew. The natives christened him "Father of Blindness," which name appeared to him a compliment, and he would use it, speaking of himself, complacently, just as a Scotsman likes to be spoken of under the style and title of the land he owns, although it be all bog. Though in the little world of men in which he lived the doctor was a fool, in the large field of science he was competent enough, and when he proved to demonstration to the other doctors in the place that a slight operation would restore the Rubio's sight, they all fell in with it, and though for years the object of their care had held their horses and they had seen him every day, without observing him, he now became of interest, just as a moth becomes of interest when it is dead and put into a case with other specimens.

Whether the sympathy that certainly exists between wise men and those whose intellect is rudimentary, and which is rarely manifested between a learned and an ordinary man, prevailed upon the Rubio to submit himself to the ministrations of the German man of science, Allah alone can tell. A

season saw the mounting-block deserted, and tourists gave their horses to be held by boys, who tied them by the reins to rings high in the wall, and fell asleep, leaving the animals to fight and break their bridles, and for a time no stream of cheerful blasphemy was heard, in any European tongue, upon the mounting-stone. In a clean unaccustomed bed in a dark corner of Hope House, the missionary hospital, the Rubio lay, his head bound up in bandages, silent, but cheerful, confident in the skill of his strange friend, but yet incredulous, after the Arab way.

During the long six weeks, what were his thoughts and expectations it is difficult to say. Perhaps they ran upon the wonders of the new world he would inherit with his sight, perhaps he rather dreaded to behold all that he knew so well and so familiarly by touch. He who, when like a lizard he had basked against his wall, had never for a moment ceased from talking, now was silent, and when the doctor visited him, to dress his eyes, and make his daily diagnosis of the case, answered to all the words of hope he heard, "It will be, as God wishes it to be," and turned uneasily between his unfamiliar sheets. At last the day arrived when doctors judged the necessary time had passed. No one in Tangier was more confident than was the "Father of Blindness," who went and came about the town buoyed high with expectation, for he was really a kind-hearted man, learned but simple, after the fashion of his kind.

At early morning all was ready, and in the presence of the assembled doctors of the place with infinite precaution the dressings were removed. Cautiously and by degrees, a little light was let into the room. Holding his patient's hand and visibly moved, the German asked him if he saw. "Not yet," the Rubio answered, and then, throwing the window open wide, the sunlight filled the room, falling upon the figure in the bed, and on the group of doctors standing by expectantly. It filled the room, and through the window showed the mountains standing out blue above Tarifa, and the strait,

calm as a sheet of glass, except where the two "Calas" cut it into foam. It fell upon the cliffs which jut into the sea below Hope House; upon the hills of Anjera, and on the bird-like sails of the feluccas in the bay, filling the world with gladness that a new day was born. Still on his bed the Rubio lay, pale with his long confinement, and with his hands nervously feeling at his eyes. All saw that the experiment had failed, and with a groan the German man of science buried his head between his hands and sobbed aloud, the tears dimming his spectacles and running down upon his beard. With a grave smile the patient got out of his bed, and having felt his way to where he heard the sobs, laid his rough, freckled hand upon the shoulder of his friend, and said as unconcernedly, as if he had not suffered in the least, "Weep not; it was not written"; then looking round, asked for a boy to lead him back again to his accustomed seat upon his stone.

IN A GERMAN TRAMP

THE tall, flaxen-haired stewardess Matilda had finished cutting Schwartzbrod and had gone to bed. The Danish boarhound slept heavily under the lee of the chicken-coops, the six or seven cats were upon the cabin sofa, and with the wind from the south-west, raising a terrific sea, and sending showers of spray flying over the tops of the black rocks which fringed the town, the S.S. *Oldenburg* got under way and staggered out into the gut.

The old white city girt on the seaward side by its breakwater of tall black rocks, the houses dazzlingly white, the crenelated walls, the long stretch of sand, extending to the belt of grey-green scrub and backed in the distance by the sombre forest, lay in the moonlight as distinct and clear as it had been midday. Clearer perhaps, for the sun in a sandy landscape seems to blur the outlines which the moon reveals; so that throughout North Africa night is the time to see a town in all its beauty of effect. The wind lifting the sand, drifted it whistling through the standing rigging of the tramp, coating the scarce-dried paint, and making paint, rigging, and everything on board feel like a piece of shark-skin to the touch. The vessel groaned and laboured in the surface sea, and on the port quarter rose the rocks of the low island which forms the harbour, leaving an entrance of about half-a-mile between its shores and the rocks which guard the town.

West-south-west a little westerly, the wind ever increased; the sea lashed on the vessel's quarter, and in spite of the dense volumes of black smoke and showers of sparks flying out from the salt-coated smoke-stack, the tramp seemed to stand still. Upon the bridge the skipper screamed hoarsely in Platt-Deutsch down his connection-tube to the chief en-

gineer; men came and went in dirty blue check cotton clothes and wooden shoes; occasionally a perspiring fireman poked his head above the hatch, and looking seaward for a moment, scooped off the sweat from his forefinger, muttered, "Gott freduma," and went below; even the Arab deck-hands, roused into activity, essayed to set a staysail, and the whole ship, shaken between the storm and the exertions of the crew, trembled and shivered in the yeasty sea. Nearer the rocks appeared, and the white town grew clearer, more intensely white, the sea frothed round the vessel, and the skipper advancing to a missionary seated silently gazing across the water with a pallid sea-green face, slapped him upon the back, and with an oath said, "Mister, will you have one glass of beer?" The Levite *in partibus*, clad in his black alpaca Norfolk jacket, grey greasy flannel shirt and paper collar, with the whole man surmounted by the inevitable pith soup-tureen-shaped hat, the trade-mark of his confraternity, merely pressed both his hands harder upon his diaphragm and groaned. "One leetel glass beer, I have it from Olten, fifty dozen of it. Perhaps all to be wasted; have a glass beer, it will do your shtomag good." The persecuted United Presbyterian ambulant broke silence with one of those pious ejaculations which do duty (in the congregations) for an oath, and taking up his parable, fixing the pith tureen upon his head with due precaution, said, "Captain, ye see I am a total abstainer, joined in the Whifflet, and in addeetion I feel my stomach sort o' discomposed." And to him again, good Captain Rindelhaus rejoined, "Well Mister Missionary, do you see dat rocks?" The Reverend Mr. McKerrochar, squinting to leeward with an agonising stare, admitted that he did, but qualified by saying, "there was sic a halgh, he was na sure that they were rocks at all." "Not rocks! Kreuz-Sacrament, dose rocks you see are sharp as razors, and the back-wash off them give you no jance; I dell you, sheep's-head preacher, dat point de way like sign-board and not follow it oop himself, you better take glass beer in time, for if

the schip not gather headway in about five minutes you perhaps not get another jance." After this dictum, he stood looking into the night, his glass gripped in his left hand, and in his right a half-smoked out cigar, which he put to his mouth mechanically now and then, but drew no smoke from it. The missionary too looked at the rocks with increased interest, and the Arab pilot staggering up the ladder to the bridge stolidly pointed to the surf, and gave us his opinion, that "he, the captain and the faqui would soon be past the help of prayer," piously adding, "that it seemed Allah's will; although he thought the Kaffirs, sons of burnt Kaffirs, in the stoke-hole were not firing up."

With groans and heavings, with long shivers which came over her as the sea struck her on the beam, the vessel fought for her life, belching great clouds of smoke out into the clear night air. Captain and missionary, pilot and crew, stood gazing at the sea; the captain now and then yelling some unintelligible Platt-Deutsch order down the tube; the missionary fumbling with a Bible lettered "Polyglot," covered in black oil-cloth; and the pilot passing his beads between the fingers of his right hand, his eyes apparently not seeing anything; and it seemed as if another twenty minutes must have seen them all upon the rocks.

But Allah perhaps was on the watch; and the wind falling for an instant, or the burnt Kaffirs in the stoke-hole having struck a better vein of coal, the rusty iron sea-coffin slowly gathered headway, staggered as the engines driven to the highest pressure seemed to tear out her ribs, and forged ahead. Then lurching in the sea, the screw occasionally racing with a roar, and the black decks dripping and under water, the scuppers being choked with the filth of years, she sidled out to sea, and rose and fell in the long rollers outside the harbour, which came in from the west. Rindelhaus set her on her course, telling the Arab helmsman in the pigeon-English which served them as a means of interchanging their few ideas, "to keep her head north and by west a little

northerly, and let him know when they were abreast of Jibel Hadid;" adding a condemnation of the Arab race in general and the particular sailor, whom he characterised as a "tamned heaven dog, not worth his kraut." The sailor, dressed in loose Arab trousers and a blue jersey, the whole surmounted by a greasy fez, replied: "Yes, him know Jibel Hadid, captain, him keep her head north and by west all right," and probably also consigned the captain and the whole Germanic race to the hottest corner of Jehannum, and so both men were pleased. The boarhound gambolled on the deck, Matilda peeped up the companion, her dripping wooden shoes looking like waterlogged canoes, and the Scotch missionary began to walk about, holding his monstrous hat on with one hand and hugging the oilskin-covered "Polyglot" under his left arm. Crossing the skipper in his walk, in a more cheerful humour he ventured to remark: "Ehl captain, maybe I could mak' a shape at yon glass of beer the now." But things had changed, and Rindelhaus looked at him with the usual uncondescending bearing of the seaman to the mere passenger, and said: "Nein, you loose your obbordunity for dat glass beer, my friend, and now I have to navigate my ship."

The *Oldenburg* pursued the devious tenor of her way, touching at ports which all were either open roadsteads or had bars on which the surf boiled with a noise like thunder; receiving cargo in driblets, a sack or two of marjoram, a bale of goatskins or of hides, two or three bags of wool, and sometimes waiting for a day or two unable to communicate until the surf went down. The captain spent his time in harbour fishing uninterestedly, catching great bearded spiky-finned sea-monsters which he left to die upon the deck. Not that he was hard-hearted, but merely unimaginative, after the way of those who, loving sport for the pleasure it affords themselves, hotly deny that it is cruel, or that it can occasion inconvenience to any participator in a business which they themselves enjoy. So the poor innocent sea-monsters

floundered in slimy agony upon the deck; the boarhound and the cats taking a share in martyring them, tearing and biting at them as they gasped their lives away; condemned to agony for some strange reason, or perhaps because, as every living thing is born to suffer, they were enduring but their fair proportion, as they happened to be fish. Pathetic but unwept the tragedy of all the animals, and we but links in the same chain with them, look at it all as unconcerned as gods. But as the bearded spiky fish gasped on the deck the missionary tried to abridge their agony with a belaying-pin; covering himself with blood and slime, and setting up the back of Captain Rindelhaus, who vowed his deck should not be hammered "like a skidel alley, all for the sake of half-a-dozen fish, which would be dead in half-an-hour and eaten by the cats."

The marvels of our commerce, in the shape of Waterbury watches, scissors and looking-glasses, beads, Swiss clocks, and musical-boxes, all duly dumped, and the off-scouring of the trade left by the larger ships duly received on board, the *Oldenburg* stumbled out to sea if the wind was not too strong, and squirmed along the coast. Occasionally upon arrival at a port the sound of psalmody was heard, and a missionary boat put off to pass the time of God with their brother on the ship. Then came the greetings, as the whole party sat on the fiddlee gratings jammed up against the funnel; the latest news from the Cowcaddens and the gossip from along the coast was duly interchanged. Gaunt-featured girls, removed by physical conditions from all temptation, sat and talked with scraggy, freckled, and pith-hatted men. It was all conscience, and relatively tender heart, and as the moon lit up the dirty decks, they paraded up and down, happy once more to be secure even for a brief space from insult, and to feel themselves at home. Dressed in white blouses, innocent of stays, with skirts which no belt known to milliners could ever join to the body or the blouse; with smaller-sized pith hats, sand-shoes and spectacles; their hands in Berlin gloves, and freckles

reaching far down upon their necks, they formed a crushing argument in their own persons against polygamy. Still, in the main, all kindly souls, and some with a twinkle in their white-eyelashed steel-grey eyes, as of a Congregationalist bull-terrier, which showed you that they would gladly suffer martyrdom without due cause, or push themselves into great danger, out of sheer ignorance and want of knowledge of mankind. Life's misfits, most of them; their hands early inured to typewriting machines, their souls, as they would say, "sair hodden doon in prayer"; carefully educated to be ashamed of any scrap of womanhood they might possess. Still they were sympathetic, for sympathy is near akin to tears and looking at them one divined they must have shed tears plentifully, enough to wash away any small sins they had committed in their lives.

The men, sunburnt yet sallow, seemed nourished on tinned meats and mineral table-waters; their necks scraggy and red protruded from their collars like those of vultures; they carried umbrellas in their hands from early habit of a wet climate, and seemed as if they had been chosen after much cogitation by some unskilled commission, for their unfitness for their task.

They too, dogged, and narrow-minded as they were, were yet pathetic, when one thought upon their lives. No hope of converts, or of advancement in the least degree, stuck down upon the coast, far off from Dorcas meetings, school-feasts, or anything which in more favoured countries whiles away the Scripture-reader's time; they hammered at their self-appointed business day by day and preached unceasingly, apparently indifferent to anything that passed, so that they got off their due quantity of words a day. In course of time, and after tea and bread-and-butter had been consumed, they got into their boat, struck up the tune of "Sidna Aissa Hobcum," and from the taffrail McKerrochar saw them depart, joining in the chorus lustily and waving a dirty handkerchief until they faded out of sight. Mr. McKerrochar,

one of those Scottish professional religionists, whom early training or their own "damnable iteration" has convinced of all the doctrine that they preach, formed a last relic of a disappearing type. The antiquated out-and-out doctrine of Hell-fire and of Paradise, the jealous Scottish God, and the Mosaic Dispensation which he accepted whole, tinged slightly with the current theology of Airdrie or Coatbridge, made him a formidable adversary to the trembling infidel, in religious strife. In person he was tall and loosely built, his trousers bagging at the knees as if a horse's hock had been inside the cloth. Wrong-headed as befits his calling, he yet saw clearly enough in business matters, and might have marked a flock of heathen sheep had he applied his business aptitude to his religious work, or on the other hand he might have made a fortune had he chanced to be a rogue. He led a joyless stirring life, striving towards ideals which have made the world a quagmire; yet worked towards them with that simple faith which makes a man ten thousand times more dangerous, in his muddle-headed course. Abstractions which he called duty, morality, and self-sacrifice, ruled all his life; forcing him ever onward to occupy himself with things which really he had no concern with; and making him neglect himself and the more human qualities of courtesy and love. And so he stood, waving his pocket-handkerchief long after the strains of "Sidna Aissa Hobcum" had melted into the night air; his arms still waving as the sails of windmills move round once or twice, but haltingly, after the wind has dropped. Perhaps that class of man seldom or never chews the cud either of sweet or bitter recollection; and if, as in McKerrochar's case, he is deprived of whisky in which to drown his cares, the last impression gone, his mind hammers away, like the keys of a loose typewriter under a weary operator's hands, half aimlessly, till circumstances place new copy under its roller, and it starts off again to work.

He might have gone on waving right through the dog-

watch had not the captain with a rough ejaculation stopped his arm. "Himmel! what for a semaphore, Herr missionary, is dat; and you gry too, when you look at dat going-way boat. . . . Well, have a glass of beer. I tell you it is not good to look at boats and gry for noddings, for men that have an ugly yellow beard like yours and mine."

"I was na greetin', captain," said the missionary, furtively wiping his face; "it was just ane of thae clinkers, I think thae ca' the things, has got into my eye."

"Glinkers, mein friend, do not get into people's eyes when der ship is anchored," Rindelhaus replied; "still I know as you feel, but not for missionary boats. You not know Oldenburg eh? Pretta place; not far from Bremerhaven. Oldenburg is one of the prettaest places in the world. I live dere. Hour and half by drain, oot from de port. I just can see the vessels' masts and the funnel smoke as they pass oop and down the stream. I think I should not care too much to live where man can see no ships. Yes, yes, ah, here come Matilda mit de beer. Mein herz, you put him down here on dis bale of marjoram, and you goes off to bed. I speak here mit de Herr missionary, who gry for noddings when he look at missionary boat go off into de night.

"Ah, Oldenburg, ja, yes, I live there. Meine wife she live there, and meine littel Gretchen, she about den or twelve, I don't remember which. Prosit, Herr missionary, you have no wife; no littel Gretchen, eh? So, so, dat is perhaps better for a missionary."

The two sat looking at nothing, thinking in the painful ruminant way of semi-educated men, the captain's burly North-German figure stretched on a cane deck-chair. About a captain's age he was, that is, his beard had just begun to grizzle, and his nose was growing red, the bunions on his feet knotted his boots into protuberances, after the style of those who pass their lives about a deck. In height above six feet, broad-shouldered and red-faced, his voice of the kind with which a huntsman rates a dog, his clothes bought at a

Bremerhaven slop-shop, his boots apparently made by a portmanteau-maker, and in his pocket was a huge silver keyless watch which he said was a "gronometer," and keep de Bremen time. Instant in prayer and cursing; pious yet blasphemous; kindly but brutal in the Teutonic way; he kicked his crew about as they had all been dogs, and yet looked after the tall stewardess Matilda as she had been his child; guarding her virtue from the assaults of passengers, and though alone with her in the small compass of a ship, respecting it himself.

After an interval he broke into his subject, just as a phonograph takes up its interrupted tale, as if against its will.

"So ja, yes, Oldenburg, pretta place; I not see it often though. In all eight years I never stay more to my house than from de morning Saturday to Monday noon, and dat after a four months' trip.

"Meine wife, she getting little sdout, and not mind much, for she is immer washing; washing de linen, de house, de steps; she wash de whole ship oop only I never let her come to see. The Gretchen she immer say, 'Father, why you not stop to home?' You got no littel Gretchen, eh? . . . Well, perhaps better so. Last Christmas I was at Oldenburg. Christmas eve I buy one tree, and then I remember I have to go to sea next morning about eleven o'clock. So I say nodings all the day, and about four o'clock the agent come and tell me that the company not wish me leave Oldenburg upon de Christmas Day. Then I was so much glad I think I wait to eat meine Christmas dinner with meine wife, and talk with Gretchen in the evening while I smoke my pipe. The stove was burning, and the table stand ready mit sausage and mit bread and cheese, beer of course, and lax, dat lax they bring from Norway, and I think I have good time. Then I think on de company, what they say if I take favour from them and go not out to sea; they throw it in my teeth for ever, and tell me, 'Rindelhaus, you remember we was so good to you upon that Christmas Day.' I tell the agent thank you, but

say I go to sea. Meine wife she gry and I say nodings, nodings to Gretchen, and sit down to take my tea. Morning, I tell my little girl, then she gry bitterly and say, 'What for you go to sea?' I kiss meine wife and walk down to the quay; it just begin to snow; I curse the schelm sailors, de pilot come aboard, and we begin to warp into the stream. Just then I hear a running on the quay, like as a Friesland pony come clattering on the stones. I look up and see Gretchen mit her little wooden shoes. She run down to the ship, and say, 'Why you go sea, father, upon Christmas Day?' and I not able to say nodings but just to wave my hand. We warp out into the stream, and she stand grying till she faded out of sight. Sometimes I feel a liddel sorry about dat Christmas Day. . . . But have another glass beer, Herr missionary, it always do me good." Wiping the froth from his moustache with his rough hand he went below, leaving the missionary alone upon the deck.

The night descended, and the ship shrouded in mist grew ghostly and unnatural, whilst great drops of moisture hung on the backstays and the shrouds.

The Arab crew lay sleeping, huddled round the windlass, looking mere masses of white dirty rags; the seamen keeping the anchor-watch loomed like a giant, and from the shore occasionally the voices of the guards at the town prison came through the mist, making the boarhound turn in his sleep and growl. The missionary paced to and fro a little, settling his pith tureen-shaped hat upon his head, and fastening a woollen comforter about his neck.

Then going to the rail, he looked into the night where the boat bearing off his brethren had disappeared; his soul perhaps wandering towards some Limbo as he gazed, and his elastic-sided boots fast glued to the dirty decks by the half-dried-up blood of the discarded fish.

HIGGINSON'S DREAM

THE world went well with Higginson; and about that time —say fifteen years ago—he found himself, his fortune made, settled down in Noumea. The group of islands which he had, as he said, rescued from barbarism, and in which he had opened the mines, made all the harbours, and laid out all the roads, looked to him as their Providence; and to crown the work, he had them placed under the French flag. Rich, *décoré*, respected, and with no worlds to conquer in particular, he still kept adding wealth to wealth; trading and doing what he considered useful work for all mankind in general, as if he had been poor.

Strange that a kindly man, a cosmopolitan, half French, half English, brought up in Australia, capable, active, pushing, and even not devoid of that interior grace, a speculative intellect, which usually militates against a man in the battle of his life, should think that roads, mines, harbours, havens, ships, bills of lading, telegraphs, tramways, a European flag, even the French flag itself, could compensate his islanders for loss of liberty. Stranger in his case than in the case of those who go, grown up with all the prejudices, limitations, circumscriptions and formalities of civilisation become chronic in them, and see in savage countries and wild peoples but dumping ground for European trash, and capabilities for the extension of the Roubaix or the Sheffield trade; for he had passed his youth amongst the islands, loved their women, gone spearing fish with their young men, had planted taro with them, drunk kava, learned their language, and become as expert as themselves in all their futile arts and exercises; knew their customs and was as one of them, living their life and thinking it the best.

'Tis said (Viera, I think, relates it) that in the last years of

fighting for the possession of Teneriffe, and when Alonso de Lugo was hard pressed to hold his own against the last Mencey, Bencomo, a strange sickness known as the *modorra* seized the Guanches and killed more of them than were slain in all the fights. The whole land was covered with the dead, and once Alonso de Lugo met a woman sitting on the hill-side, who called out, "Where are you going, Christian? Why do you hesitate to take the land? the Guanches are all dead." The Spanish chroniclers say that the sickness came about by reason of a wet season, and that, coming as it did upon men weakened by privation, they fell into apathy and welcomed death as a deliverer. That may be so, and it is true that in hill-caves even to-day in the lone valleys by Icod el Alto their bodies still are found seated and with the head bowed on the arms, as if having sat down to mourn the afflictions of their race, God had been merciful for once and let them sleep. The chroniclers may have been right, and the wet season, with despair, starvation and the hardships they endured, may have brought on the mysterious *modorra*, the drowsy sickness, under which they fell. But it needs nothing but the presence of the conquering white man, decked in his shoddy clothes, armed with his gas-pipe, gun his Bible in his hand, schemes of benevolence deep rooted in his heart, his merchandise (that is, his whisky, gin and cotton cloths) securely stored in his corrugated iron-roofed sheds, and he himself active and persevering as a beaver or red ant, to bring about a sickness which, like the *modorra*, exterminates the people whom he came to benefit, to bless, to rescue from their savagery, and to make them wise, just, beautiful, and as apt to differentiate evil from good as even he himself. So it would seem, act as we like, our presence is a curse to all those people who have preserved the primeval instincts of our race. Curious, and yet apparently inevitable, that our customs seem designed to carry death to all the so-called inferior races, whom at a bound we force to bridge a period which it has taken us a thousand years to pass.

In his prosperity, and even we may suppose during the Elysium of dining with sous-préfets in Noumea, and on the occasions when in Melbourne or in Sydney he once again consorted with Europeans, he always dreamed of a certain bay upon the coast far from Noumea, where in his youth he had spent six happy months with a small tribe, fishing and swimming, hunting, spearing fish, living on taro and bananas, and having for a friend one Tean, son of a chief, a youth of his own age. The vision of the happy life came back to him; the dazzling beach, the heavy foliage of the palao and bread-fruit trees; the grove of coconuts, and the zigzag and intricate paths leading from hut to hut, which when a boy he traversed daily, knowing them all by instinct in the same way that horses in wild countries know how to return towards the place where they were born. And still the vision haunted him; not making him unhappy, for he was one of those who find relief from thought in work, but always there in the same way that the remembrance of a mean action is ever present, even when one has made atonement, or induced oneself to think it was not really mean, but rendered necessary by circumstances; or, in fact, when we imagine we have put to sleep that inward grasshopper which in our bosoms, blood, brain, stomach, or wheresoever it is situated, is louder or more faint according to our state of health, digestion, weakness, or what it is that makes us hear its chirp.

And so it was that cheap champagne seemed flat to him; the company of the yellow-haired and faded demi-mondaines whom Paris dumps upon New Caledonia insipid; the villas on the cliff outside Noumea vulgar; and the prosperity and progress of the place to which he had so much contributed, profitless and stale. Not that for a single instant he stopped working, planning and improving his estates, or missed a chance to acquire "town lots," or if a profitable 10,000 acres of good land with river frontage came into the market, hesitated for a moment to step in and buy. Now, though by this time he had long got past the need of actually trading

with the natives at first hand, and kept, as rich men do, captains and secretaries and lawyers to do his lying for him, and only now and then would condescend to exercise himself in that respect when the stake was large enough to make the matter reputable, yet sometimes he would take a cruise in one of his own schooners and play at being poor. Nothing so tickles a man's vanity as to look back upon his semi-incredible past, and talk of the times when he had to live on sixpence a day, and to recount his breakfast on a penny roll and glass of milk, and then to put his hands upon his turtle-bloated stomach, smile a fat smile and say: "Ah, those were the days, then I was happy!" although he knows that at that halcyon period he was miserable, not perhaps so much from poverty, as from that envy which is as great a curse to poor men as is indigestion to the rich.

So running down the coast of New Caledonia in a schooner, trading in pearls and copra, he came one evening to a well-remembered bay. All seemed familiar to him, the low white beach, tall palm trees, coral reef with breakers thundering over it, and the still blue lagoon inside the clump of bread-fruit trees, the single tall grey stone just by the beach all graven over with strange characters, all struck a chord long dormant in his mind. So telling his skipper to let go his anchor, he rowed himself ashore. On landing he was certain of the place; the tribe, about five hundred strong, ruled over by the father of his friend Tean, lived right along the bay, and scattered in palm-thatched huts throughout the district. Then he remembered a certain coconut palm he used to climb, a spring of water in a thicket of hibiscus, a little stream which he used to dam, and then divert the course to take the fish, and sitting down, all his past life came back to him, as he himself would say, "C'était le bon temps; pauvre Tean, il doit être Areki (chef) maintenant; sa sœur peut-être est morte ou mariée . . . elle m'aimait bien . . ."

But this day-dream dispelled, it struck him that the place looked changed. Where were the long low huts in front of

which he used to pass his idle hours stretched in a hammock, the little taro patches? The zigzag paths which used to run from house to house across the fields to the spring and to the turtle-pond were all grown up. Couch-grass and rank mimosa scrub, with here and there ropes of lianas, blocked them so that he rubbed his eyes and asked himself: Where is the tribe? Vainly he shouted, cooeed loudly; all was silent, and his own voice came back to him muffled and startling as it does when a man feels he is alone. At last, following one of the paths less grown up and obliterated than the rest, he entered a thick scrub, walked for a mile or two cutting lianas now and then with his jack-knife, stumbling through swamps, wading through mud, until in a little clearing he came upon a hut, in front of which a man was digging yams. As many of the natives in New Caledonia speak English and few French, he called to him in English: "Where black man?" Resting upon his hoe, the man replied: "All dead." "Where Chief?" And the same answer: "Chief, he dead." "Tean, he dead?" "No, Tean Chief; he ill, die soon; Tean inside that house." And Higginson, not understanding, but feeling vaguely that his dream was shattered in some way he could not understand, called out: "Tean, oh, Tean, your friend Johnny here!" Then from the hut emerged a feeble man leaning upon a long curved stick, who gazed at him as he had seen a ghost. At last he said: "That you, John? I glad to see you once before I die." Whether they embraced, shook hands, rubbed noses, or what their greeting was is not recorded, for Higginson, in alluding to it, always used to say: "C'est bête, mais le pauvre homme me faisait de la peine."

This was his sickness. "Me sick, John; why you wait so long? you no remember, so many years ago when we spear fish, you love my sister, she dead five years ago. . . . When me go kaikai (eat) piece sugar-cane, little bit perhaps fall on the ground, big bird he come eat bit of sugar-cane and eat my life."

Poor Higginson being a civilised man, with the full

knowledge of all things good and evil contingent on his state, still was dismayed, but said: "No, Tean, I get plenty big gun; you savey when I shoot even a butterfly he fall. I shoot big bird so that when you go kaikai he no eat pieces, and you get well again." Thus Higginson from his altitude argued with the semi-savage, thinking, as men will think, that even death can be kept off with words. But Tean smiled and said: "Johnny, you savey heap, but you no savey all. This time I die. You go shoot bird he turn into a mouse, and mouse eat all I eat, just the same bird." This rather staggered Higginson, and he felt his theories begin to vanish, and he began to feel a little angry; but really loving his old friend, he once more addressed himself to what he now saw might be a hopeless task.

"I go Noumea get big black cat, beautiful cat, all the same tiger—you savey tiger, Tean?—glossy and fat, long tail and yellow eyes; when he see mouse he eat him; you go to bed sleep, get up, and soon quite well." Tean, who by this time had changed position with his friend, and become out of his knowledge a philosopher, shook his head sadly and replied: "You no savey nothing, John; when black man know he die there is no hope. Suppose cat he catch mouse, all no use; mouse go change into a big, black cloud, all the same rain. Rain fall upon me, and each drop burn right into my bones. I die, John, glad I see you; black man all die, black woman no catch baby, tribe only fifty 'stead of five hundred. We all go out, all the same smoke, we vanish, go up somewhere, into the clouds. Black men and white men, he no can live. New Caledonia (as you call him) not big enough for both."

What happened after that Higginson never told, for when he reached that point he used to break out into a torrent of half-French, half-English oaths, blaspheme his gods, curse progress, rail at civilisation, and recall the time when all the tribe were happy, and he and Tean in their youth went spearing fish. And then bewildered, and as if half-conscious that he himself had been to blame, would say: "I made the roads,

opened the mines, built the first pier, I opened up the island; ah, le pauvre Jean, il me faisait de la peine . . . et sa sœur morte . . . she was so pretty with a hibiscus wreath . . . ah, well, pauvre petite . . . je l'aimais bien."

UN MONSIEUR

IT may be the desire for sympathy that makes us yearn to pour our troubles into another's ear—how wise was the first Pope who hit upon auricular confession and made it sacred—that impelled Elise to tell the tale.

"He was," she said, "un monsieur, about fifty years of age, rich, dull, and only wanting wings to fly, so much he was puffed up with his position in the world and with his wealth.

"No, he did not treat me badly for some time, that is to say, after the visits that he used to pay me, he generally put a ten-pound note upon the mantelpiece and got into his motor with an air as of a Jupiter who had just parted from a Danae. After he went I usually took a bath, and then sat down to read Hérédia or Verlaine, some author or another of a kind that took me off into a world shut to such men as was my wealthy friend.

"He did not talk much; you see he was an Englishman, and seemed as if he was ashamed of speaking much to me, although of course that did not stop his visits to my house. I fancy that he regulated them on hygienic grounds, and rather thought he was a virtuous man in not allowing a full rein to what I feel assured he called the baser appetites . . . baser, eh? . . . the only ones he knew. He looked upon me, I am well aware, but as an instrument of pleasure, a sort of musical-box which he could set in motion with a ten-pound note.

"Upon my side I thought of him but as un monsieur, a man, that is, who, neither good nor bad, yet pushed by sensuality came to me at his stated intervals and went away appeased. His kisses bothered me, and all his efforts of what he perhaps called love were of a maladroit, that used to make me laugh . . . but then, in my profession, one gets to know what to expect of men.

"Of course he was quite unintellectual. The arts of every nature . . . love is an art"—and here she smiled and fluffed her hair out at the sides with conscious pride—"were but so many pastimes served up to him by men who lived by them. They all appeared to him a sort of intellectual 'saltimbanques,' I verily believe, and he must surely have referred to them as painters, poets, fiddlers, and all that kind of thing."

She paused, and the light falling on her fair wavy hair and on her well-kept hands gave her an air of such refinement that it was hard to think of her as the wage-slave of such a man as she had just described. Tall, slight, and well proportioned, blessed with the taste that seems the birthright of the women of her race, the little jewellery she wore appeared as much a portion of herself as the faint, half-professional smile that played about her lips, from the teeth outward, when she was talking to a man.

"You must not think," she said, "that I have laid the colour on too thickly; that would be inartistic. No, he was simply, as I said, un monsieur . . . not to use a vulgar word, which perhaps would have been better in his case.

"Ridiculous, of course—*cocasse;* I am not sure if there is any word in English that quite is the equivalent of that.

"Ludicrous, preposterous, no. . . . I mean he was absurd and had what we call 'une vraie tête de mari' . . . need I say more than that?

"All fat, rich men of fifty, when they make visits to such girls as me must of necessity be . . . *ah yes*, odd. To me the fact of being rich has something in it of itself that seems preposterous. Fancy how I must feel, who look on love as one of the fine arts, to have to *singer* it with a dull, fat, old man, simply because he has a big account at some bank or another! Apart from morals, to which I make no claim, it is an insult to the God who, I suppose, created both of us."

As she said this she drew herself up to her full height, hollowed her back a little like a gymnast on the horizontal bar, and then went on again.

"I had not seen my monsieur for a week or two and wondered what had happened to him, when a brougham with a pair of chestnut horses drew up at the door. Out of it got a lady, tall, dark, and with a sable cloak that must have cost an eye out of her head, elegant, svelte, well dressed and . . . beautiful. She did not give her name, but sent a message saying that she would like to see me, and when my maid had showed her up into the room she came forward and addressed me by my name . . . but charmingly, not stiffly in the least, and without any air of patronage. I asked her to be seated, and she sat down as naturally as if she had been on a visit to a woman of her own world, and after looking at me for a moment curiously, said in good French: 'I have come about a business matter.' I did not ask her how she knew my name, but merely smiled at her, with a slight inclination of the head, wondering internally what kind of business could have brought her, and as she paused a little as if she were debating what to say, I ran my eye over her, trying to recollect if I had seen her anywhere, but all to no avail. As we say, I undressed her, mentally, divining, as it were, she wore good stays and linen underneath. Her feet, of course, I saw, and her well-made French shoes and open-work silk stockings, and from her person generally there floated a faint odour of discreet perfume such as a woman of her world, who does not have to make men turn and look at her, can afford to wear.

"She certainly was beautiful and of my type, that is, the type that I admire, with dark and glossy hair in which you might have seen your face as in a looking-glass. All she had on I inwardly commended, her clothes and jewellery, though there was nothing in especial in the latter except a string of pearls, not large, like those in which a banker's wife or rich American, so to speak, hangs in-chains, but finely shaped and dazzlingly white. All this review, of course, took but a minute, and as she did not speak a strange suspicion crossed my mind why she had come to see me, but as if she herself had read what thought was passing in my mind she blushed a

little, making her look divine, and saying, 'It was on business that I came,' took from her muff a photograph, and holding it towards me asked me if I had ever seen the man.

"To my amazement, on looking at it I saw the man I have been telling you about, in all his commonness. His ears, just like an elephant's, his mottled face, and above all that air of thinking he was somebody only because he happened to be rich, all shouted at me.

"Still, every métier has its etiquette, and mine, just like a lawyer's or a priest's, is, or should be, discreet. I did not like the man, and on the other hand the lady was quite charming; but I stood firm, and, after looking at the thing indifferently, answered: 'I never saw the man,' and sat expectantly. A shadow of annoyance crossed the lady's face, and once again she came back to the charge.

" 'Are you quite sure?' she said, 'for I am told he is a friend of yours, and let me tell you I am rich.'

"This got my back up just a little, for it appeared as if I never should get clear of riches, and it amazed me, as it annoys me now, to see rich people go about trampling on honour and on everything by the mere weight of gold. Still, she was far too nice to quarrel with, so I sat quietly and smiled, and happening to catch her eye, we both stopped a half-laugh, and I, divining that she was my monsieur's wife, wondered what her next move would be to try and make me tell. After a word or two she got up from her chair, and going to the door paused for a minute as she held it in her hand, than turning to me smiling, said:

" 'I respect your honesty; but, after all, what does it matter whose money that it is you take? I will pay you anything up to a thousand pounds if you but choose to recollect.'

"Once more I thanked her, knowing, of course, that I was acting like a fool, but pleased to show her that I held honour above money—in spite of what I was. As she was going out she turned, and said again: 'Name your conditions'; and when I smiled and shook my head, she looked at me just for a

moment, half with regret, half with approval, so that when finally she closed the door I felt, although she had not got her way, that she respected me for having made a stand against my interest.

"Three or four days had passed and the impression of the lady's visit had almost worn away, when who should come to see me but my friend.

"He looked so prosperous, and had so great an air as if the world might have belonged to him had he not been too lazy to write out a cheque . . . an oversight which, no doubt, when he had time enough, he still would rectify . . . I hardly found it in my heart at first to tell him what had passed. As soon, however, as he began what he perhaps called love-making and tried to draw me on to his knee, I, of course, seeing that he looked on the whole thing but as a hygienic visit, determined not to lose the chance.

"Therefore instead of letting, as I generally did, my head fall on his shoulder, closing my eyes, and thinking I was in the Calais steamer on a rough day, I pushed him off, and standing up, looked at him steadily between the eyes.

"He, for his part, knowing that he was going to pay for my complaisance, and having not an inkling of what was passing in my head, looked at me, half amazed, half puzzled, and exclaimed: 'Elise, old girl, what's up that you behave in this way to a pal?'

"Whether it was his confidence, a confidence that neither God nor Nature had given him the right to exercise with any woman upon earth, or whether I was revolted at my 'sale métier . . . car c'est un vrai métier de chien, tu sais,' I do not understand. When I had my hand free, for he tried to pull me to him and treat my attitude as a good joke, I said without a prelude: 'Your wife was here the other day.'

"He did not think I was in earnest and answered me in French, which he spoke fluently: 'Elle est bonne, celle-là.'

"However, when I had told him how his wife was dressed and named a bracelet that she wore he got more serious. I

rather liked to tease him, and for a moment thought of saying something that would throw doubt upon his wife, but being also curious to find out what had been the real reason of her call, I merely said: 'She took your photograph out of her muff and showed it to me.'

"You never saw a man change quicker than my friend.

" 'What did you say, Elise?' he muttered; and when I told him that I had quite disclaimed all knowledge of him, he took my hand in his and kissed it, exclaiming: 'Elise, you are a splendid girl. . . . My wife wants to divorce me, but we have a child, a girl of ten, old enough to appreciate the disgrace of the Divorce Court, and I would give the world to spare her.'

"For the first time I rather liked him, for he spoke feelingly, and really seemed a man and not a money-bag. He drew me to him, and for the first time in my life I let him do so without repulsion, and holding both my hands he swore I had saved him, that he would do anything in the world for me, and if I wished to lead a different life and go back home to France that he would settle money on me to help me either to learn painting, which had always been my dream, or to get married to a decent man. When I had thanked him and he had kissed me several times, but quite as a man kisses a real woman and not as he had done before upon his visits, he went away, assuring me of his eternal gratitude, and turning at the door, just as his wife had done a day or two ago, to thank me once again. This time I was *bouleversée* and sat down and cried, thinking what I would do, and came to the conclusion to go to Paris and begin work in some atelier under some painter of repute. I thought of all that I should do—and for the life of art cannot, of course, be quite devoid of love—determined to choose some young painter or another, whom I should live with . . . quite en bourgeois, and darn his socks, and be as good to, for I am très bonne fille, as I have told you, as was possible.

"That was a happy afternoon, and my task, when in the

evening business sent me out to the Alhambra or some other music-hall, comparatively light. Days passed and weeks, then months, and still my grateful friend was silent, until one day, walking beside the Serpentine, I met him with his wife. He paled, and she looked at me quickly, and clutching at his arm, said: 'Tiens! C'est elle.'

"I made no sign, but fixed my eyes upon a child sailing his boat and passed on my way. That's all," said Elise; "and for the man, at first, I thought he was a lâche and then a scoundrel; but now I know he was but a rich man—'un monsieur'—and probably to-day, if he thinks of the matter now and then, promptly dismisses it, and says as he lights up a big cigar: 'She was a prostitute.' "

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

UN AUTRE MONSIEUR

I HAD lost sight of Elise, said my friend, until one day as I was walking past, I am not sure if it was Woolland's or some other shop, I met her face to face. She seemed a little thin, I thought, and though she walked as gracefully as ever, holding her skirt up in the way that only her compatriots ever can compass, she looked so pale I saw that she was ill.

"What is the matter, Elise?" I said; "is it an affection of the heart?" To which she answered with a side look at the window of the shop to see if her hat was straight, "No, not of the heart; you forget that we professionals (she pronounced the word 'professionnelles') are quite impervious in that region; it is the chest I suffer from. The doctors say it is the life I have to lead—but really I have had congestion of the lungs."

We went to lunch just opposite in the grill-room of the hotel, where she insisted upon taking what she called "*La table de l'adultère,*" for she declared as it was in a dark corner she had noticed several affairs ripen, as she expressed it, in the surrounding gloom.

She asked for mineral water, and consommé with an egg in it, and proceeded with her tale.

"Things had been bad with me . . . how, I don't know. . . . They go in cycles, I suppose; for at one time I had, as you know, half the Turf Club . . . how shall I put it . . . on my books?" She made a gesture with her hand, graceful and gracious, to the waiter, who was offering her a dish, and bit her lip and smiled as a man passed in with his wife and daughter, whispering to me, "He is a client," and then coughing a little, began again to talk.

I looked at her with interest, and saw how she had fallen away, that her collar-bones made ridges in her light summer

blouse. "Ah yes, I see why you are looking," she said; "it is dreadful to be thin, that is to say, in my line of business, for men seem to like women to be fat, and I am nothing but old bones."

"I think it was a cold I caught coming back from France, where I had been to see my mother. Yes, do not laugh, and please say nothing about *ma mère* for I know you insularies see something comic about that. We, on the other hand, are much more lovers of our family than you, though you think not. Of course, both men and nations always plume themselves on qualities they lack. Yes, I am quite a little of a philosopher, that is, since I was ill. Well, well, it was congestion, as I said, which nailed me to my bed. When you are young and strong and nearly six feet high, as I am," and here she straightened herself up with pride, looking a true descendant of the pirates (she came from Normandy), with her fresh colour, bright grey eyes, and masses of fair hair, "it is silly to be ill. Illness in our profession usually takes us soon to the end of our resources, for we, of course, must make a good appearance, and frequent good restaurants, then we are always robbed by all who deal with us.

"Illness too lifts the veil, or the veneer of chivalry which most of our friends assume to us, although, of course, it also brings what out is good.

"I become a moralist, you see, a dreadful thing in one who has to chatter always and be gay. Ah!" and an ashy look came on her cheeks, "those awful conversations about horses, bad plays, and books, and pictures that you would not use in a back kitchen as a screen. I think the frankly indecent even harasses me less. Your countrymen, you'll pardon me, I know, have little *talent de société*, or perhaps they keep it all for those they think that they respect, that is, if any Englishman really respects a woman in his heart. Chivalry, eh—bah, we see what that means. Either the idea is real, or else it is a fraud. If it is real, it should make a man the same to every woman, especially to us who minister to his pleasures and

act as lightning conductors to his home. 'That sets me thinking"—and here that wintry smile she used as an armour flitted across her face—"why a man's home is to be pure and a woman's not so, for strange as it may seem I have a home, that is a house in which I live. When a man leaves me with his 'Good night, old girl,' I often wonder if he thinks his home is purified by what has taken place in mine. Well, well," and as she drank her coffee, her eyes wandered to the man she knew who, seated with his daughter and his wife, kept his face turned away.

"Yes," she said, "there is a man who, no doubt, in his own home is kind enough, as men are kind, if all goes right with them. You see, I and his daughter, are almost of one age . . . a pretty girl enough she is, and would look better if only she wore good stays. How strange it is, here in this island, you so often see expensive clothes ill-worn and spoiled by villainous bad stays or made ridiculous by a cheap pair of boots, or something of that kind.

"When I fell ill, and when the doctors said I must go home and not live as I had been doing, the father of that girl was one of those to whom I went for help. He never answered when I wrote him, nor for that matter did any of the men who used to like to take me to the theatres when I was well and was a credit to their taste."

She paused and waived away a cigarette, saying she did not want to look like a *bourgeoise en goguette*, and as the man she said she knew walked out behind his women-folk, fixed her eyes on him, till he reddened, as she put it, "at the back of his neck between the collar and the hair."

Then smiling and coughing now and then, she told how one of her friends had pawned her rings to send her home to France and, turning serious, said, "Now I will tell you of a trouble I am in. You know that women of our class, if by some accident we fall in love, love far more fiercely than those that you call honest. I know the Spanish proverb about our love—that it resembles nothing but a fire of straw—but,

there, it was concocted by a man . . . *les hommes, ça vous abîme une femme.* Personally I have never felt it . . . that is, but once or twice at most, and each time have regretted it, both for myself and him. You smile when I say 'him,' but it is true. However, that is not now what troubles me, but this.

"I know I cannot follow up this life, nor wish to, and I have told you that it was my ambition to study Art and try and learn to paint. No, no, I do not think I am a genius . . . nothing of the sort, but still I think I might have made a living in the Art world had I but had the chance. Now, though, the thing for me is how to live at all. I think I told you that I was a *mannequin* in a great Paris shop. I am you see both tall and elegant. . . . No, don't laugh . . . it is so; for I was born, although my family was poor, with an innate sense of elegance in dress . . . the sentiment of rags." This was so manifestly true, my friend said nothing, but merely nodded, wondering what she would say. "I cannot go back to that way of life; for during the past years I have lived in luxury, that is to say, I have enjoyed a luxury tempered by the ever-present dread of want, but still a luxury. I have read books and haunted the museums; I know the various schools of painting tolerably well, revel in Corot, adore Degas and Monet, think Whistler inspired, and therefore cannot go home and settle down, marrying some *Betrave* or another, perhaps a local cattle-dealer or something of the sort. Now, though, a chance has come into my life, and I can neither jump at it nor yet neglect it; for as I told you I am *très bonne fille*, and would not like to wreck the life of anyone, especially of one who says he loves me . . . yes, loves me as I am."

She put a falling hairpin back into her hair, played with her bag, taking it up and looking at the clasp. Then put it down and after having sipped her coffee, began again to talk.

"The thing is this way . . I had a lover—a *vieux colonel*, not a bad sort of man, stiff, angular, and with his face reddened by whisky and the sun of India, just such a man as Loti talks about, honourable I think, and wearisome. He liked to

spend long hours with me, drinking and telling me about himself, his life, his horses and the women that he thought that he had loved, *cocasse, le Colonel,* but still a gentleman. One day he brought an officer of his to see me. He was, I think, from Lancashire, some kind of a provincial anyway, and above all a type.

"What was he like? Well, short and freckled; such feet and hands, and with a neck the colour of a lobster, with the sun. His clothes not bad, but with a note of something of *le gentilhomme campagnard* about them. For a watch-chain, a leather . . . lip strap, I think, you call the thing . . . it go beneath the curb, and he tell me it is for when the horse shakes his head, so that he cannot turn the bit, and run away with you. Over his boots little white gaiters; and gloves, such gloves—so thick, like the stuff you make a fencing-jacket. Fair hair, what of it was left—not that he was bald, but I mean what the barber he have left—a mouth with teeth like a shark, an eye-glass, and a perpetual transpiration on his skin. Not pleasant-looking, eh? That where you make a mistake, then. He did look pleasant, and a gentleman, although he never said a word but 'Aoh yes, awful pleased to meet yer,' with an occasional 'Ha,' which at first made me jump.

"Why the colonel brought him I never could make out, but from the first night I saw his junior officer had fallen in love with me.

"I am not as a rule nervous . . . well . . . under fire; but this man, his very bashfulness made me feel like a milk-maid when her lover sits upon a gate and whistles at her. Not a word did he say whilst his superior officer imbibed champagne, and talked of horses he had known thirty or forty years ago, except to interject a 'Ha' at intervals. At last, though, it seemed near ending, the colonel rose to go. He pulled me to him, and giving me a winy kiss or two, remarked: 'Good-bye, old girl, we're going now. Tal tal Be virtuous and you'll be unhappy,' or something of the kind.

"I turned and saw to my amazement that the lieutenant, who had drunk little, that is for one of his great bulk, had turned quite pale, and glared with rage at his commanding officer.

"He let his eyeglass fall with a loud chink against his waistcoat buttons, and holding out his hand said: 'Good-bye, some day I'll call again'; so like a gentleman I—I own, was surprised.

"After a day or two I got a letter from him—not too well written, and with a fault or two in the orthography—saying he meant to come and see me to-morrow afternoon.

"Of course I thought it was the usual kind of thing, and when the time came dressed myself in a light peignoir, laced, and with views to the inside, as we say. It suited me, fair as I am, and with my yellow hair, for it was colour *eau de Nil*, and as the gladiators when they marched round the ring no doubt put on their best, I always like to look my best when I expect to be a sacrifice.

"Punctually at the time he said, my officer came in. I came to meet him, smiling, thinking perhaps that he would kiss me, after the fashion of his kind, who do not generally waste time in words or in preliminaries. However, he held out his hand, and said a little stiffly: 'Glad to see you looking well,' and sitting down upon a chair, began to look at me. What an original, I thought, as he kept staring at me, until I half began to blush with his continued gaze.

"His eyes roved round the room, and now and then his monocle fell, and he would put it back again, with a contortion of his face, like something on the stage.

"At last he fixed his eyes upon a picture that I had . . . well, *un peu leste*, but nothing very shocking, and turning red, he pointed up at it, observing: 'What a beastly thing. Ha! yes, abominable.' I did not know if I should laugh or be angry, but going to it, turned it round against the wall and said: 'Now are you satisfied?' Then with some difficulty and with a number of 'Ha's' to help him through his tale,

he said he loved me. I had not heard a man say that for the last five years, and it took me by surprise, so I said nothing, and I think turned red a little. Still I did not take in his meaning, and made a motion as of rising, for I expected he was like the rest of them. 'Not that,' he said. 'By God! Ha! No, I really mean it. Miss Elise, I love you awfully.'

"Still I said nothing, for what on earth was there to say." After a little while he went away, but came again at intervals, always the same—stiff, red and awkward, and with the same song on his lips.

"At last one day, quite *à brûle-pourpoint*, he asked me would I marry him, but quite respectfully, and in a way that rather made me like him . . . it was phenomenal. What could I say, especially as after saying what he had he took my hand and looking at me through his monocle said: 'Could you love a fellow?'

"I was sore put to it, for I saw that I had to do with quite another sort of monsieur to him I told you of before.

"Love and my officer were not to be carried in one bag. Well, I felt grateful to him, for I understood the sacrifice he was prepared to make far better than he did himself, poor innocent.

"When he had pressed me for an answer, I told him all that he would have to undergo if I said 'Yes' to him. His horses—I had not told you he was in the cavalry—would all have to be sold. He gulped a little comically, for he was a great polo player, but manfully agreed. As his own colonel knew me, he would have to change into another regiment. . . . I thought of foot. . . . Of course I had to do the thinking . . . and go to India. He said that it would be a wrench, and that the Grabbies were a beastly lot. However, he would do it all, if I would love a fellow.

"As he talked on and held my hand, at first half timidly and then as in a vice, I rather liked him: he was so childlike and original; but an original.

"Love—no, that was impossible, and so I told him. His

face fell for a minute, but he returned again, back to the charge. He didn't care. Ha! no, not a bit. I was the only woman that he ever cared for, and if I only would consider, take time, er—he did not wish to hurry me . . . so like a gentleman."

Elise stopped for a moment and then——

"I have taken time to think of it, and cross to-night to France, paying my passage with the money that my friend pawned her rings to get for me. His money I refused to take. . . . I, too, have honour . . . and the best thing for me is to go home to my own village Pont de l'Evêque, and try and get my health.

"Then I shall live *en paysanne*, go to bed early, and in the morning hear the swallows in the roof; there used to be a nest above my window three or four years ago. How good their morals are compared to ours . . . I mean the swallows. 'Tis quite an idyll to see them feed their young ones, and the male never looks at any bird, except his *légitime*.

"When I feel better I shall go to Mass, not that I am a firm believer, still less a practiser, but the thing does you good somehow—perhaps the singing, or perhaps the recollection of one's childhood, or something of the kind.

"So I am off, and in a day or two shall be perhaps wandering along the Chaussée, with its double rows of trees, silvery, and looking like a Corot against the fields of corn.

"I shall be thinking of what I told you, and of how difficult it is to love a fellow. Then, when I am better, who knows what I shall do? . . . Ah! *méchant*. No, never, I swear it; he said he never would till we were married . . . you see he was not in the least like you, or any other man."

SIGNALLED

THE Casino rooms were crowded. French, English, Poles, Russians and an occasional Japanese, looking just like a monkey who had escaped from freedom in the woods and voluntarily had put the chains of trousers and of coats about his limbs, all jostled in the throng. Above them hung the concentrated scent of all the perspirations of their different races, mingled with every essence that the perfumer's art affords to mitigate the odours which humanity distils. All were well dressed, and eighteen centuries of culture and of care had culminated in making every one alike. Thus all spoke French, of course with varying accents; but as they all read the same books, had the same thoughts, and wore the selfsame clothes, the accident of accent did not separate them, and they formed one immense, well-scented family as to exteriors, though with their hands all secretly raised against each other, and their tongues wagging ceaselessly in calumny, just as a bulrush wags by the edge of some old mill-race, half filled up with mud.

All round the tables men and women stood, pushing and elbowing, and with their eyes fixed on the money on the cloth, adoringly, as it had been the Holy Grail and they all vowed to search for and to grasp it, at the peril of their souls.

Men who at home were magistrates and pillars of a church, or members of some county council, gazed at the demi-mondaines as they went to and fro brushing against the players to attract attention, with their eyes aflame or with a swinish puckering of their lips which spoke of lust unsatisfied, not from religious principles, but from the fear of spies and interfering friends.

They eyed the women just as a starving dog looks at a

butcher's shop, sideways and lurkingly, for fear a blow may fall upon him, out of some quarter unforeseen. Smartly dressed women looked at their sisters of the demi-monde half with dislike half with approval, as if they somehow understood that they, although they were transgressors of trades-union rules, were helping them in their life's strife with man; whilst others with the colour rising in their cheeks pressed up against them as they passed, just as cats press against a chair, meeting their eyes with a bold comprehending stare. Remote from all the rest in a cane rocking-chair there sat a girl, thin, dark and dressed quite quietly, so quietly that at first sight you might have taken her for a young married woman who had got separated from her friends and had sat down to rest.

Her high-heeled shoes just tapped upon the ground as the chair rocked, and as it balanced to and fro revealed her stockings half way up the calf, so fine and worked so open, that it appeared the hair upon the flesh might pass between the stitching, just as a little fish escapes through the fine meshes of a net.

Men passed before her, in the half-sneaking and half-swaggering way that men assume before a woman whom they have held between their arms a night or two ago, and whom they dare not recognize in public, although they want the world to see that they are well acquainted, and in its censure half applaud the fact. Their hands involuntarily just touched their hats, and as they looked an inch or two above her head murmured a greeting, and then straightening their legs they fell into a strut, as of a bull-fighter who has been nearly caught by the bull's horns, and wants the crowd to think he is not frightened as he edges to the limits of the ring. She gave her salutation by a half rising of her eyebrows, and a faint smile, half of amusement and half contempt, just flickered on her lips, as some one with his wife or daughter on his arm suddenly flushed or paled and looked with interest at the chandelier as he passed opposite her chair. Callow and

fledgling youths boldly saluted her, colouring as they did so to their hair, whilst grave and decorated men just raised their eyes, and fat provincials wildly plunged and bolted at the sight of her, just like young horses faced suddenly in a deep lane by the fierce rattle of a motor-car.

Still nothing in her dress or manner was unlike that of a hundred other women in the rooms, as she sat quietly at the receipt of custom, watching her various acquaintances as they passed by give by their guilty looks the lie both to the faith and the morality they held, and which no doubt she held herself as sacred, and as fixed as are the poles, although she saw them outraged in her person twenty times a week, just as in Spain, 'tis said, that a society founded to protect the lower animals, finding itself in difficulties, arranged a bull-fight to increase its funds and clear away its debts.

But as she sat indifferent, waiting what fate should send her, to her amazement another girl, but little younger than herself, sat down beside her, and with "Il fait tray sho nais-ce pars," fell into conversation with her as easily as if they had been friends.

The girl who knew the world glanced at her quickly, half thinking that the stranger came from some island in the Ægean Sea, but saw at once her island lay to the north, and that she had addressed her in pure innocence of heart.

Though she had often seen fair English girls, dressed in short skirts, boisterous in manner, fresh-coloured and half manlike in their ways, striding along as if their knees would burst their petticoats, this was the first time she had met or spoken to one, and the experience somehow brought the blood into her cheeks.

"Yes, it is hot," she said, and stole a glance half of amazement, half approbation, at the fresh English girl, who seated by her side seemed quite unconscious of the difference in their lives and talked so naturally and in such curious French. She marked her sunburned hands, gloveless and strong as

those of a young man, and, made observant by the manner of her life, saw she was pretty at a glance, although her clothes were ugly and her fair hair all gathered in a knot. As she thought upon this thing and on that, and on the shielded life of the fair English girl, so little younger than herself, and on her own, a flush rose on her face as she perceived that she was shy before the other's innocence and want of knowledge of the world. At first the conversation languished, till the stranger, who had sat down with so much lack of ceremony beside her, looking her over with wide-open eyes, said: "I liked the look of you, as I was straying up and down, looking out for my mother, who had got lost whilst I was watching the roulette. You looked so pretty, and you are well dressed, you know you are, and so does everyone; all the men look at you, when they pass by, just as a schoolboy at a cake in a shop-window. How foolish they all are."

Used to all kinds of compliments point-blank, none that she ever had received, in all her life, had put her to such difficulty, and once again she stole a look at her fair complimenter's face to reassure herself that she was really as innocent as she appeared to be. "Well dressed," she murmured; "well, any woman likes to be well dressed." To such a commonplace of femininity no answer was required beyond a simple affirmation, and a look of admiration at the clothes.

"Why, what a lot of men you know!" the English girl exclaimed, as counts and viscounts whom she knew by name walked by, as they sat talking, staring a little at the strange companionship of the two girls, all making a half recognition as they passed. "Why is it, none of them take off their hats—I thought that Frenchmen always were polite?"

Then as she got no answer, but a tapping of her companion's heels upon the floor, and a faint blush as of annoyance at her words, fearing she had offended her acquaintance, whom she already had begun to admire on account of her nice clothes, and evident knowledge of the world, she said, just as a schoolboy might have said: "It's awful hot in here.

Would you mind going out into the air and we can sit and talk?" The other, like a person in a dream, got up and followed her, and the two girls walked through the crowd, the English girl quite unconcerned, pushing her way, after the fashion of a forward player in a football team, smiling and only anxious to get out into the air. The other, red and uncomfortable, but hypnotized by the frank manners and good faith of her she followed, hardly knew where she was until she found herself seated in a cane chair upon the terrace, and heard her guide say: "Well, this is better than the stuffy room."

From the Casino came the hum of voices, and points of light seemed to break through the windows, and a faint smell of perspiration and stale scent defiled the atmosphere as it came floating up to where they sat. A breeze sprang up and cleared away the fleecy clouds before the moon, whose rays, half deadened by the glare of the electric lamps upon the terrace, seemed to be concentrated shyly on the magnolia trees which formed the background of the artificial scene, falling on their metallic-looking leaves, which it subdued and turned to plates of silver in its light. Moths hung about the great electric lamps, like men about a courtesan, and seemed to swim in the long beam of light which issued from the globes. Sometimes they flew against the glass with a dull furry noise, and then fell stunned and lay upon the paths, with their wings fluttering, until some high-heeled shoe, just peeping out from underneath a cataract of lace, crushed them to pulp upon the stones, or carried off their bodies sticking to the sole.

Silence fell on the girls as, walking to the balustrade, they stood and looked over the wide white road, across the lawn set with its bunches of white pampas-grass and of euonymus, upon the sea, which stretched out cool and clean and undefiled even by all the tawdriness of the Casino and its lights. Up from the shore there came a long-drawn sigh as if the waves had brought to land the last expiring breath of some lost

sailor as they swirled upon the beach. The light air stirred the curls upon the foreheads of the girls, and the mysterious companionship of youth drew them together without words making them feel a bond of sympathy.

Tears stood in the dark eyes of the French girl, she did not quite know why, and something seemed to force her to bestow her confidence upon the girl who stood beside her, although she felt it would be useless, as she could never understand.

As she stood hesitating, the other, seeing her tears, caught at her hands and said: "I say, whatever is the matter? I am so sorry. Tell us about it, it will do you good, Is it about any of those bounders who grinned at you, and did not raise their hats?"

The other looked at her, and struggling to keep back her tears, said: "No, no, not about any man, I hate them all . . . that is, I am not sure . . . I think one is not quite so horrible as all the rest—but then I have no right to talk to you, so innocent, about such things." She felt the hand of her companion tighten on her own, and all her sorrows running from her heart; her prostituted youth, the recollection of her home, perhaps the thought of the one man less horrible than were the others, forced her to speak and lay her head upon the shoulder of the mysterious friend, who had come as it were out of the depths to comfort her.

As she was struggling to choke down her tears and speak, and as the English girl stood wondering, but sympathetic and expectant, clasping her hands in hers, a strong high voice broke through the stillness of the night.

"Ethel, my dear," it said, "where have you got to? We have been looking for you for the last hour, and father is so cross." The girls just pressed each other's hands and separated, as ships which have but signalled may be parted by a mist, without the time to make out either their numbers or the ports from which they hail.

WRIT IN SAND

AT sundown long lines of motor vans, as huge as arks, converged upon a sandy waste space of the southern little town. Over it towered the Ligurian Alps, rugged and sun-scorched. The waves of Mare Nostrum just lapped against the sea wall that bounded the neglected piece of ground on which a canvas city was to arise, like Jonah's gourd, during the night. The vans scrunched on the pebbles as they came up in long procession, and formed a great corral.

Each monstrous car took its own place with mathematical precision, for Amar's Circus had been long upon the road, having pushed what it called upon its posters "Une Audacieuse Randonnée" as far as Angora, and was now back again in France.

From the cars came the cries of animals, the miauling of the lions, the grunts of camels, and the stamping of the horses eager to be fed.

The scent that can be best described as "Bouquet de Cirque," compounded of the odours of the various animals, sawdust and orange peel, of petrol, dried perspiration, leather, of cordage, canvas ill laid up when damp, cheap perfumes and cosmetics, all the quintessence of a world apart from any other kind of world, a world where men and women risk their lives daily, and reck nothing of it, a world in which they live, in fellowship with horses, elephants and mules, a fellowship that makes them different to all other kind of men, as sailors were in the old world of wind-jammers, floated out into the night air. An army sprang into existence, as it were, from the ground, composed of workmen, unlike any other workmen, looking for the most part like grooms and chauffeurs out of place, but smart, alert and singularly quick upon their feet. All of them seemed able to turn a somersault, saddle a

horse, or swarm up a rope ladder, as well as a smart seaman in an old China tea clipper, when he ran aloft into a top, over the futtock shrouds. Babel itself, when Jahwe, out of jealousy of man set confusion on the tongue of men, was not more polyglot. Russian, American, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, German, and Czechoslovak jostled one another in their mouths. None spoke the others' language properly, but everyone knew the word for horse, rope, saddle, dance, sawdust, knot, slack or tight wire, handspring and elephant, in the others' tongue. For ordinary purposes, they had formed a lingua franca, out of the various elements of speech of all the languages, shotted with oaths and with indecencies, that worn as smooth as pebbles in the current of their speech had become merely adjectives.

These heterogeneous good companions, for no one better merited the term, like ants, set at once busily to work, under the blue glare of the electric light, that as by magic, others of the band had installed on what an hour ago was a mere sandy waste.

Long tents, to serve as stables, grew up like mushrooms, leaving a vacant space, where the great tent should rise. To them, men in trousers of a horsy cut, or breeches unbuttoned at the knees, muffled in greatcoats with woollen comforters up to their ears, covering their gipsy-looking greasy hair, for far Multan had sent its quota to the kaleidoscopic host, led horses that stepped as quietly and unconcernedly as if the planks down which they walked had been green fields, those fields that they would see no more, for once a circus horse their lot is fixed as the fixed stars.

Piebalds, roans, chestnuts, sorrels, duns, skewbalds, creams with black points, steel-greys, and whites of every shade from purest snow to honey-coloured and that palest shade of cream, known in the Argentine as Duck's Egg, formed an equine flower-bed.

Chiron himself when seated underneath a spreading oak in Thessaly—he chose the finest of the mares to blend with

the most beautiful of the young men to form the Centaur, that flight of man's imagination, that for once has outgone nature—could not have found better material to his hand. The equine race of the whole world has furnished representatives, from Shetland ponies up to the heavy Mecklenburger, with his round back, fit to count money on, and his stout legs, that do not seem to feel the strain when six or seven riders poise and caper on him as he canters round the ring. Yukers from the Hungarian puzta, with their fine limbs, light bone and saddle backs, as if nature itself had formed them for the circus, intelligent and docile, their long and flowing manes and tails, full gentle eyes and open nostrils giving them the look of an Arabian steed designed in tapestry upon a banner screen in a Victorian house. In a long line they stepped out of their boxes, as delicately as Agag, with that look of comprehension and disdain performing animals all acquire, as if they felt the difference between an artist and a mere spectator, lolling in his stall, with a fat paunch and well-filled pocket-book.

After the horses had disappeared into their stables, a drove of camels, herded by Algerians, or Moroccans, but perhaps best described as "natives," for in what lone duar, or in what black tent of camels' hair they had first heard the call to prayers, only themselves and Allah could pronounce with certainty.

Dressed in brown jellabas, or dingy white burnouses, they yet preserved entire their racial look, that almost all the other members of the troupe had shed when they took on their circensian nationality.

When the lions, tigers, seals and all the other wild beasts that made the now rapidly growing canvas town look as if Noah's Ark was delivering her cargo on Mount Ararat, had been caged, slowly the elephant appeared, with the look of peculiar cunning in his little porcine eyes that makes him only just inferior to mankind, as to intelligence, although perhaps superior in bonhomie. He seemed to feel the dignity

of his position as a survivor of a prehistoric world. All the time that the animals were being settled in their stables, the work went on, but silently, so that when a great canvas dome slowly was hoisted into position in the middle of the waste piece of ground, it seemed to rise out of its own volition from the sand. Then and then only was the noise of hammers heard, as a platoon of men drove home great iron tent pegs, to tauten up the ropes.

Around the ring they ranged the padded barrier, fencing in its thirteen paces of diameter, that sacramental measurement in which horses and men perform in circuses, all the world over, whether in the centre of great cities or in a field outside a village, in rural England, Poland or Hungary. Seats, boxes, and electric lights, the high trapezes swinging from the roof, appeared to have been always just where the efficient squads of workers had placed them only half an hour before.

By daybreak all was ready for the next day's performance, and when the ring-master, wrapped in an old, white box-cloth greatcoat with huge bone buttons, and a woollen comforter round his neck, looked at the work, and said, like the great ring-master in Eden, "that it was good," a hoot on an electric whistle summoned all hands to breakfast in the dining tent.

In the real, or the unreal world, according to the point of view of those who live in, or outside, a circus, the false dawn had vanished, and the sun was rising over the mountains and the sea. A white mist hung upon the palm trees, magnifying and ennobling them, just as it does out in the desert, or in the tropic everglades, from whence they had originally been brought. The sun's first rays fell on the lateen sails of the fishing boats as they stole out from every little village port and launched into the sea. From them there came the muffled sounds of oars, of cordage creaking in the old-time wooden blocks, as the great yard, that Latin yard, common to all the boats that sail the Latin sea was hoisted

into place. Such yards, and ships not much unlike the fishing boats that now began to feel the morning breeze, the ships of Agamemnon and Ulysses, must have borne when Helen's smile launched them upon the siege of Troy. The fishing boats, their pointed sails giving them an air as of a flight of seabirds, sank by degrees below the horizon, as silently as gulls disappear into the haze, before the eye of man can mark their disappearance. Shoreward, the rippling waves lapped on the pebbly beaches, with a scrunching sound as of the cat-ice crackling on the edges of a pond.

The ragged mountains, dotted with villages grouped round their church, the houses sheltering about it, as it were for protection from the modern world, just caught the morning sun. The panorama, fantastic and unreal, with the white houses of the coastal towns, the imported vegetation, and their look of unreality, seemed designed as an ideal background for the great dome of canvas that billowed gently, shivering a little in the light sea breeze, just as a jellyfish thrown up by the sea shivers upon the sand.

All was in order, by the hour advertised. A van with windows cut at intervals, behind which sat well-dressed girls, as quiet and orderly as typists in a city office, served as the box-office. All seemed as permanent as if the dome of canvas had been the dome of a cathedral, stone-built and pointed, designed to last for centuries. Nothing about it gave an air of instability, but set one thinking that in a fleeting world, where all is changing (but as invisibly as the hands move upon a clock), canvas is the most fit material to build with, for those whose lives are after all passed in a circus, where they perform, even with less volition of their own than the trained animals, and pass away as the smoke of a cigarette dissolves into the air.

Bands blared, and men standing before the side-shows shouted the charms of the bearded lady, pig with five legs, the human skeleton, and the fat women from Trebizond, certain of custom, for mankind unaware of its own freakish-

ness, delights in abnormalities, seeing in them perhaps, something they can wonder at, despise, and patronise, and leave the tent amused and comforted by their superiority.

A continuous stream of people passed the wicket gate where stood the gigantic negro in a green uniform, with that grin upon his face that makes the people of his race quite as inscrutable as the most enigmatic Japanese or Chinaman. Packed close as sardines in a barrel, the audience had that air of expectation that circus audiences must have manifested since the time of the Romans and the Greeks.

In the reserve seats sat a few tourists, some beautifully dressed in plus-fours, that costume tailors have designed as in derision of humanity. The well-known smell of tan, of horses' urine and of orange peel, with all the various scents, human and those compounded by perfumers, that every audience in the world throws off, luckily unknown to itself, hung in the air, in spite of all the efforts of smartly-dressed attendants, who wielded sprinklers with disinfectants.

Gone were the days when everything was dingy, the coats of horses staring, the performers' dresses dirty or ill-washed. All was as spick and span as in a West-End theatre. Smart girls in velvet coats of Georgian cut, flowered waistcoats, knee-breeches and silk stockings, high-heeled shoes, leaving a train of scent in passing, sold programmes and showed people to their seats, with an air fit for any court, or at least such courts as those of Monaco and Gerolstein. The seats, the boxes and the ring itself were models of neatness and of cleanliness, and that, although the circus had been upon the road for months, travelling in Asia Minor and in Turkey, and only meant to spend three days where they had pitched their tents, and take the road again.

Into the arena bounded a Hungarian horse "en liberté," dark chestnut, with white stockings and a blaze down its face that made it "drink in white," as the Brazilians say.

Coursing round the ring, it seemed to cover miles, although the whole circumference was but a hundred feet. At a sign

from the ringmaster, who, dressed in evening clothes, his chambrière with the lash lying on the ground, the fiery courser of the desert (see the handbills) stopped and reversed its course. Then, rising on its hind legs, it fought the air before the whirling lash that never touched it, and following its trainer, to the opening in the barrier, bounded back to its stables, passing through the ranks of the attendants, in their green uniforms, who clapped it on the quarters as it passed.

Men and girls rode, springing from the ground on to their horses' backs as agilely as gauchos. They faced the tail, balanced themselves on one another's shoulders, straddled their horses' necks, and passed beneath their bellies coming up on the other side, vaulted over the hind quarters, were dragged round the arena holding to the tail, whilst all the time the docile animals galloped like clockwork, as if they knew their riders' limbs were in their care, and that as much depended on them as on the men and women in their partnership.

A Caucasian horseman galloped into the ring. About the middle height, handsome and as "wonderly deliver" as was the Knight of the Canterbury Tales, the Caucasian dress suited him to perfection. The long green, fur-trimmed coat, set with its silver cartridge cases on the breast, clung to a waist as slender as a girl's, the red, soft, heelless riding boots, that eastern horsemen all affect, were home into the stirrups, that with their short leathers did not allow the feet to come below the belly, and gave the rider the appearance of standing upright on his horse, in the big peaked Cossack saddle with its pads, like footballs, that support the thighs. You saw at once that he was a Gigit, trained to the tricks of the best school of Gigitofka, in Vladikafkas, or some other mountain town in the recesses of the frosty Caucasus. His Persian lambswool cap, set off his bold and sun-browned features, leaving a few tight curls below it, on his forehead. His light and cutting snaffle bridle, with its thin red reins, he held high,

in his left hand, to give a better purchase on the palate, for the Caucasian horsemen use no curb. Holding one hand above his head, his nagaika dangling from his forefinger, he rushed into the arena checking his Anglo-Arab in the centre of the ring, where it stood, turned to stone, for half a second, before he wheeled it once again into full speed. Rising in his short stirrups he stood erect upon the saddle, and then letting himself fall trailed round the ring with his head just brushing on the sand. Agile as a cat, he swung himself again into his seat, threw down a handkerchief, retrieved it from the saddle, with a "back pick-up," and riding gently round the ring, amid thunders of applause, saluted gravely with his hand touching his lambswool cap.

The women looked at him, as if he were a cake in a confectioner's, devouring him in anticipation with their eyes. Some said he was a prince in his own country, which may have been the case, for certainly he looked a prince upon his horse. Well did Cervantes say that riding makes some men appear like grooms, others like princes.

Next appeared a troupe of Chinese acrobats; modern Chinese without their pigtails, who had travelled the world over and spoke every language, and yet the instant that they set saucers spinning on a long slender cane, or piled a line of rods on one another, striking away the lowest of the pile and deftly catching the topmost rod upon one finger-point, became as oriental and inscrutable as if they had never left their native country for an hour. Even in the circus ring they seemed to represent a culture that had existed centuries before Europe had emerged from barbarism.

More graceful if less powerful than their Western brethren, who with their great muscles looked a little crude beside them, they seemed as if their feats were an hieratic ritual from an older world, rather than circus tricks. On her bay thoroughbred, with patterns traced upon its quarters with dandy brush and water, his coat so bright and shining that a man could shave by it, the lady of the Haute Ecole rode gracefully into

the ring. Seated in her white buckskin saddle, she held her reins so lightly that they scarcely seemed to move, but with a grip as strong as steel. The smartly fitting habit showed her well-cut patent-leather boot, set off with a bright spur. Holding her long Haute Ecole whip in her right hand, she touched her horse upon the shoulder gently, putting him through all the airs of the manège, the Spanish Walk, the Passage, Volte and Semivolte, making him shift his croup, change feet with his hind legs, rear, plunge and finally kneel down, whilst she leaned back in the saddle easily, smiling her thanks to the delighted audience. The ring-master, advancing, held her horse as she dismounted at a bound, and bowing to the audience, retired, executing two or three of those little skips without which no feminine performer in a circus ever leaves the ring. Demos must have his jesters just as in older ages emperors and kings kept private fools at courts. In this age of mass production the clowns who have replaced, or perhaps merely succeeded, the jesters of an older world, for nothing changes in man's mental atmosphere, tumbled by platoons into the ring. Their antics, quips, quiddities and cranks fell rather flat on a French public, too civilised and not attuned to "le gros rire" that so delights a British audience. Perhaps the national lack of bonhomie accounts for it to some extent, but certainly jokes that set audiences in other countries hilarious with delight, were received rather coldly, much in the way one listens to the club bore with his well-worn and pointless platitudes.

One turn and only one the clowns apparently held in reserve for all eventualities fairly brought down the house, and dissipated the air of cold reserve and condescension that their first efforts had not availed to thaw.

Dressed as a comic Spanish bull-fighter, mimicking the airs of a Matamoros that bull-fighters affect, hollowing his back and strutting, whilst he held his wooden sword in the approved position, over the red cloak doubled on his left arm, a tall thin clown advanced into the ring. Stopping

before a pretty girl, perhaps placed there by the ring-master in the same way that company promoters get a mine "salted" before they give the public the privilege of purchasing their shares, he laid his hand upon his heart, made a môck heroic speech, and with the appropriate gesture flung his "montera" on the ground. Then from the entrance rushed in a great dog, equipped with horns, and hunted him after a few ineffectual passes, all round the ring. Dropping his wooden sword and all his airs of a Torero, the clown rushed about in unavailing efforts to escape the onslaughts of the "bull." At last he fairly fled before his adversary, who seized him by the collar of his jacket and was borne out struggling, behind the scenes. Then for the first time the audience gave itself up to the magnetism that once started surely affects a crowd, and laughed till tears ran down the rough faces of the peasants from the villages and made respectable and well-dressed bourgeois shake their fat sides with laughter, and wipe their glasses as they leaned back in their seats, vanquished by that one touch of folly that makes the whole world kin. No circus is complete nowadays without its "drug store" cow-boys to spin a rope and ride a horse trained to plunge three or four times, without putting up its back, that the audience takes to be a buckjumper. They may or may not have been real cowpunchers, once upon a time, but generally come from some western cow-town, where they have learned to lasso in the local stockyards and corrals. They wore silk shirts, wristlets of patent leather, and round their necks gaudy silk handkerchiefs, artistically knotted, that fell upon their shoulders in two points, forming what is called a *golilla* by the Mexicans, though the word, no doubt brought over by the Conquistadores, really means a ruff. Their loose, rather low riding boots, slashed in the front with red and yellow leather, were stuffed into their trousers, cut tightly, such as the Mexicans affect. Each of them carried a well-coiled lasso in his hands. With wonderful dexterity, they spun their lassos, forming the loop so quickly it seemed a living thing

that grew beneath their hands. Gradually it circled up and down, rising and falling round the body of the lassoer, who jumped through the loop, threw a back somersault, lay down and rose again, till finally the fifty feet of the long heavy rope, in a vast ring, was whirling in the air. The other youth spun a rope in each hand, keeping a short cord spinning in his teeth. He cracked a stockwhip, cutting a piece of paper from his companion's hands, at ten or twelve feet off, a feat that would have cost a finger-joint to the man who held the piece of paper had the lash fallen upon it.

Then a man stood against a shutter, with his arms extended, and the two youths outlined his figure on the boards with butchers' knives, thrown with such force they quivered in the wood.

Nothing appeared to interest the audience so much, for it was something anyone could understand, with the additional element of danger to another's life, so dear to those who pass their own removed from any risk. For the first time the faces of the youths took on a grave expression, and as they drew the knives out of the shutter one whispered something to the other, who, glancing for a moment over his shoulder, smiled and spat upon the ground. Then came the turn that showed the difference between circus tricks, however dexterous, and roping on a ranch. In the one case a man depends upon himself, and as a juggler by continual practice performs feats that appear incredible, so does the circus lasso expert make a rope seem almost living in his deft hands. Upon a ranch, or even in a circus, to rope animals is quite another matter, for it is impossible to train a horse into co-operation with the man who wields the rope. All that can be done by the best trainer in the world is to ensure that the horse gallops evenly and does not flinch when the man makes his cast. The knife-throwing over, and the trained buckjumper duly ridden, a man in chaparreras, a word the cow-punchers have changed to "chaps," wearing a ten-gallon hat, and all the rest of the indumentaria of his calling, rode into the ring.

He put his horse into a slow canter, bearing a little on the bit to make him raise his forehand, whilst the roper, watching his opportunity, stood by to throw and catch the horse by the front feet. He dwelt a little long upon his aim, perhaps through over-care, and as he threw his cast was just a fraction of a second late, and struck the horse's legs as they touched ground, instead of circling them when in the air. The rope came back into his hand, like a snake recoils upon itself if it has missed its spring—a most annoying thing to happen to a man who knows that he knows how to rope, but that occasionally occurs to the best cattlemen.

His companion muttered something to him that made him frown, and gathering up his lasso after a sign to the man upon the horse, he poised himself again to throw his rope.

This time he tried to do the feat a little differently. Instead of aiming at the forelegs, when in the air, he threw the loop in front of them, intending that the horse should step into the noose, and with a deft twist of his wrist to pull it up upon the legs. Again he was a trifle soon, and only caught one foot, an ugly throw that pulls the limb out in an ungainly position, and in the case of a wild animal may cause an accident.

The audience not knowing anything about such matters cheered vociferously. Honour was saved, and the two youths retired, dragging their legs a little, with the gait, real or assumed, of men who pass their lives trailing great spurs upon their feet.

No one can tell why the European who generally acts as a mahout to a trained elephant should always be got up as a French explorer in an old-fashioned book of travels, in spotless white, with a sun helmet on his head. Yet so it is, and as the elephant is a discerning animal, it may be that he would not perform if his mahout adopted any other costume. Elephants have performed in circuses ever since the times of ancient Rome, when they walked upon the tight rope, danced, fought in the arena, and perhaps now and then knelt on a

Christian, when Nero was in search of novelty.

Educated, or rather civilised spectators—the two states are not identical—must always look with compassion on a performing elephant. Certainly he is not overworked, but somehow he strikes one as though he would be more in his own element piling great logs into position in a teak forest in Burmah, or helping to make roads in Southern India.

To see the monster, with his intelligence, and his docility, so careful not to hurt any of the pygmies, fussing about him, is a sad sight, and sympathy goes out to the elephant. When the mahout orders him to lie down, it is as if the dignity of man, a dignity, if he is worthy of it, that he should share with all the animals, is being outraged. Standing on a tub, it is as if a valued friend was put into the pillory for fools to gape at. When the mahout swings himself upon his head by one of his tremendous ears, and strikes an attitude as if he were defying the stage thunder, it shows at once that there must be some kind of partnership between the man and the huge animal.

But when the trainer makes him stand up, balancing himself on his forelegs, it is a sight as sorry as it would be to see a learned judge, duly bewigged and robed, after delivering his judgment in an important case, turn round and elevate his worshipful posterior in the air for the inspection of the people seated in the court. He waddled off, with his mahout cracking a whip, to stand and muse perhaps in his own quarters on the strange ways of men, or to be wrapped in the contemplation of his travels from the time when, as a calf, he first set out, following his mother, to be a wanderer upon the road. The pity of it is that he cannot write memoirs, for if he could, how many things he might be able to impart about ourselves, that have escaped our eyes!

The cruel spectacle over, cruel, that is, to those who feel that elephants were not intended to be clowns, for without doubt his trainer loved him as the apple of his eye, addressing him in private life as "mon vieux," "old fellow," or "viejito,"

according to his nationality, and would have braved the flames to save him had the circus taken fire, four bay horses trotted into the ring.

Standing in the centre of the arena, much in the way a hostess in an embassy stands to receive her guests, the ring-master, in immaculate dress-clothes, stood to receive them on their entry. They bowed their heads, pawed gently with their near forefeet, and waited his commands. All were in high condition, with their coats shining, as bright as a horse-chestnut, when in the autumn it falls and bursts its covering on the green moss beneath the trees; their eyes were bright, their manes and tails well combed and dandy-brushed, their feet polished like new cricket-balls, and all were so alike that the best ranchman accustomed to pick out a single horse from amongst hundreds running in a corral might have been puzzled to say which, in the language of his craft, was which, and which the other of them.

At a sign from the ring-master, they ranged themselves like soldiers, and cantered round the ring, and as they passed the opening to the stables, four greys joined them, and then, four chestnuts, and four blacks. All were as well matched and as well turned out as the first four, and as they galloped they went so evenly and were in such condition that you might have counted money on their backs without a single piece of it falling to the ground. They wheeled and stopped, changed front, and strung out into a long line, put their feet on the barrier, and came back again into their formation, like well-regulated clockwork. All seemed to take a pride in their own beauty, and a pleasure in their work, and now and then in passing, nipped at each other playfully, or threw up their heels as they fell into line.

Taking their trainer as a pivot, at a walk they formed a cartwheel and revolved slowly, the various colours serving as the spokes.

Lastly the trainer raised his chambrière and whirling it about before their noses, they rose on their hind legs, fighting

the air with their forefeet, so close to him that he seemed to disappear, lost in the thicket of their flowing manes and tails, with their feet flashing round his head.

He lowered his whip, and forming fours again, they trotted off, each four waiting decorously till it received the signal to advance towards the opening. Then the attendants raked the ring where the horses' feet had churned it up, till it looked like a little sandhill in the desert, after a troup of camels has passed over it. As one of them unhooked the rope-ladder that dangled from the roof, all heads were turned towards a little platform at the end of the tight wire that stretched high above the ring. Balancing poles were fastened to it, and a white wooden chair. From the back there appeared three figures wrapped in greatcoats, whom hardly anyone had seen enter, as everyone had his eyes fixed upon the wire. "The Perestrello Family, the greatest wire-walkers the world has ever seen, renowned for their amazing feats, that have called forth the admiration of all beholders in both hemispheres"; so said the programme, now advanced, shedding their wrappers, to where the ladder hung.

A hum of admiration greeted them when they stood ready to perform, for Latin audiences have never lost their love of beauty in the human form, that has come down to them from their ancestors in Rome, who in their turn received it from the Greeks.

Just for an instant the trio remained motionless, feeling the pride instinctively of their appearance, just as a fine horse appears to feel and to rejoice in his condition, and as unconsciously. With his arms thrown round his children's waists the father looked at them with that air of love and of possession that a fond father feels in something that he has given life to. In this case not only had he given life, but doubly created, by his care in training up to physical perfection those copies of himself.

Not more than five-and-forty years of age, and about five-feet-eight in height, the ideal stature for a perfect

athlete of the ring, his crisp brown hair curled low upon his forehead, as the Greeks have depicted in their statues of Olympian victors. His muscles stood out on his arms, but not so much as to amount to a deformity, as is so often seen in athletes who have sacrificed everything to strength but have forgotten symmetry. His neck, round, not too short, but strongly made, was set so well upon his trunk that it left hardly any hollow beneath the clavicle, and the whole man gave the appearance of great strength joined to activity.

His children seeming about nineteen and twenty were not unworthy of their progenitor, and looked like copies of their father, not drawn to scale, but executed by some artist who had seen at a glance all really essential to the picture.

The band that had blared out incessantly, discoursing tangos, jazz and patriotic tunes, the chief performer, a stout negro: who on his terrific instrument, that may be best described as a mudhorn, from which no one but a member of his race seems able to extract anything but a metabolic rumbling, now ceased its fury.

A gentleman dressed in a morning coat, striped trousers, with white spats upon his patent-leather shoes, holding his tall hat in his left hand, now begged the audience to refrain from their applause during the Perestrellos' act, for he explained the slightest slip upon the wire would of necessity be fatal, for they performed without a net.

Nothing could possibly have been more pleasing to the audience, who in the way of audiences all the world over, hoped inwardly that it would be their luck to witness one of those accidents that it reads of in the Press, with so much gusto.

The girl, putting her foot into a loop, was run up lightly to the platform at one end of the wire, holding with one hand to the rope and with the other blowing kisses to the audience, as she swung through the air.

Bounding upon the platform with a skip or two, she grasped the chain supporting it and looked down upon the

upturned faces, confident, youthful, and as unconscious as is a butterfly when it alights upon a flower. Her brother followed her, running up the ladder as easily as if he had been walking up a stair, his feet finding the rungs almost instinctively, as surely as in Colombia a red howling monkey passes from tree to tree. The father followed his two children, and then the girl, seizing her long white balancing pole, tripped across the wire with so much confidence that one forgot to be afraid. She turned and tripped back to the middle of the wire. Her brother joined her, and they passed one another by a miracle of equilibrium. The father, lightly as his children, ran to the centre of the ring, pretended to make a false step and fall, sat down upon the wire, rose again upon one foot, executing all his feats so easily and with such grace that the whole tent rang with applause.

Balancing a wooden chair upon the wire, the elder Perestrello seated himself upon it, looking as secure as if he had been seated in a well-padded armchair in the window of a club. His son climbed on his shoulders, sat with his legs round his father's neck, drew out a cigarette from his waistband, lighted it and smoked a puff or two, sending the smoke out in a cloud from both his nostrils, and then tossed the stump negligently into the ring. Most people would have thought that they had done enough, and put their lives in peril sufficiently to please the most avid thrill-monger. With infinite precaution, placing her feet as carefully as a steeple-jack picks his way up a tall chimney on a windy afternoon, the girl climbed like a fly upon a window-pane, so little did her feet appear to move, upon the chair, and from the back of it, on to her brother's shoulders, where she stood upright, waving a little flag. The audience held their breath, as if it were afraid to add any additional vibration to the air. Rough fishermen and peasants held their hands before their eyes, women caught tightly at the arms of those who sat beside them; the well-fed bourgeoisie were frozen in their chairs, and even those who never took their gaze off the

performers had a strained look, such as you see come over sailors' faces after a close call. At last the Perestrello Family slid down the ladders to the ground. They did not skip in answer to the applause, but bowed and stood for a moment, the father's arms about the children's necks as if he recognised, that once more they were safe.

With a wild cry a troupe of Arab tumblers bounded in for the last turn. The Chinese had presented types of an old civilisation, long anterior to ours, the Perestrello Family, the poetry of the circus, but the wild-looking Arabs had a charm peculiarly their own. Probably they came from Si Hamed O'Musa in the Sus, that ancient Hollywood of Arab acrobatism that furnishes troupes of Arab tumblers to every circus in the world. Half Arab and half Berber, nothing can ever really civilise them, and though so many of them have performed in London, Paris, New York and Berlin, and speak French, German, English or what not, with perfect fluency, sometimes even marrying European wives, there are but few of them who on their holidays do not go back to the Sus, cast off their European clothes, and enjoy a sun bath of barbarism.

So lithe and active were the younger members of the troupe, so wild and flowing their great mops of hair, that it was difficult to tell which of the whirling figures, bounding and turning catherine-wheels and somersaults upon the sand, was a boy or a girl, or if there was an intermediate india-rubber sex, born in the Sus, to tumble through the world.

The elder men had the grave look that years advancing give to all Arabs, when they begin to think of Allah and interlard their speech with pious phrases. This does not take away the racial characteristic of being able to pass out of repose into the wildest ecstasies of fury. The grave and handsome elder members of the troupe, who had stood quietly whilst the boys and girls performed, occasionally encouraging them with a shrill cry, harsh as a seagull's, suddenly became animated.

Bounding across the ring, leaping and somersaulting so quickly that the eye had as much difficulty in making out their limbs as if they had been spokes of some great swift revolving wheel, they fairly outdid all the younger members of the troupe. Such leaps and such contortions, such quickness on the feet, such self-abandonment, only could be seen from those who in the zowia of Si Hamed pay homage to the saint of acrobats. With a loud cry they left the arena, some of them shaking out the sand from their long hair.

The show was over, and the audience filed out, just before midnight, as orderly and with as great decorum as if they had been coming out of church. Almost before the last of them had left the circus, workmen began to pull down everything. The dome of canvas that had appeared so permanent and as if designed to last a century, fluttered down like a gigantic moth, and men began to fold it, almost before it had ceased fluttering.

Men who but half an hour before had been models of grace and of activity, now moved about in heavy greatcoats, smoking cigarettes. Women, their hair untidy and their faces hardly streaked with the grease-paint of their make-up, flitted from caravan to caravan, or stood chattering in groups. By daybreak all was ready for the road. Nothing remained on the bare space of ground, upon the outskirts of the town, of all that microcosm of human life, its dangers, beauties, disillusions, loves, hatreds, and jealousies. Nothing was left to mark the passage of the great town of canvas that had arisen in a night, fallen in an hour and passed away, like life—nothing, except a ring upon the sand.

A MORAL VICTORY

MY Aunt Alexia, whom I remember vividly, though she died more than forty years ago, was a type of the Yorkshire gentlewoman now long extinct. Short, and dark-haired, with eyes that seemed to be upon the point of starting from her head, she had a strong and wiry moustache, and when by chance she did not pull it out a growth of beard upon her chin, which used to make me shudder when as a boy she kissed me and they grated on the skin. I do not think this outward, visible sign of masculine interior forces gave her much trouble or annoyance, for she would say with pride, "My cousins the Fitzgibbons all have beards, both women and men alike." Family pride was a strong point with my good aunt, as she was nearly related to almost all the county families of Yorkshire, which interparentage a Scottish aunt of mine used to term scornfully in speaking of her, "Alexia and her fatiguing relatives." She always dressed in black, carried eternally a bag embroidered with steel beads, and was a little deaf, but never used a trumpet, saying that nearly all her Yorkshire cousins were as deaf as she was, with considerable pride.

She was a Churchwoman, not because of any special partiality for the ritual of the Church, but because, born as she was a member of a county family, it would have been impossible for her to belong to any other faith. Ladies and gentlemen, as a rule, were Churchmen, unless they happened either to be eccentric in their tastes or Roman Catholics. The latter faith was, as it were, a visitation from on high which they had inherited from birth, in the same way as a hare-lip or a big purple blotch on one side of their face. To be eccentric was permissible if one was either born a Martin, or a Fitzgibbon, or any other of the hierarchy of the West

Riding, such as a Mundell or a Milton-Rounde. A game-keeper might be a dissenter, but not a coachman or a butler, for it was painful to sit behind a man who was not properly baptised, or to drink wine poured out by one who did not walk up the church on a Sunday as it were strewed with eggs.

My Aunt Alexia, either by reason of her deafness or descent, had a hard temper, much like the disposition of an Airedale terrier; in fact, all her relations said that she was "varmint," a term which in their mouths was laudatory, for they applied it indifferently to dogs and horses, animals at least as sacred in their eyes as was the cat to the Egyptians, as well as to mankind. Still, she was kind-hearted, though brusque and masculine, and not without a vein of tenderness. As a child I stood in awe of her, partly on account of her exterior, partly because she was so deaf; but she had humour, a gift that always wins the confidence of children in a way older people seldom understand.

As fate would have it, this lady, a pattern of propriety and commonplace, with all the virtues and the failings of her class, her strong self-will and great austerity of face and bearing, had for a mate a man as different from her as the day is from the night, or, as she would have said, as chalk from cheese, in her old-fashioned speech.

Born in a military prison at Verdun, General Hickman Currie had grown up, not only speaking French, but quite a Frenchman in his ideas and ways. Short and well-made, he must have been in youth what he called *un joli garçon;* but in the days when I remember him he was a wizened little man, alert and active, and with a chestnut wig that could have taken in nobody, and least of all a boy. Well over seventy, I remember him rolling his eyes and playing the guitar, as he sang love-songs in the Spanish tongue, which language he had acquired in youth, and spoke it volubly in the Gallic fashion, accentuating every syllable alike, so that it seemed a kind of gibberish more than a human speech.

His wigs were my delight, for he had three of them, and now and then, when he was staying at a country house, he would appear with one a little longer than the last, and after looking in the glass would say, "My hair has grown ridiculously long," and go off into town.

All his upbringing and his military life, for he had served with credit in several campaigns, were not much calculated to make him what is called "domesticated," and his chief object to the last day of his life was what he euphemistically styled gallantry, being, as he said, "equally at home with any one of them." How such a man, with all his graces and his wigs, his songs to the guitar, his love of women, and his way of looking at the world, could have endeared himself to Aunt Alexia, always puzzled me. They seemed to pull together passably, for he, no matter what his practice may have been, always was outwardly discreet, and treated her with deference, and, though he made no secret of his tastes, never gave cause for scandal, and yet one felt that there was something not quite right between them, rather divined than seen. Their marriage had been one of inclination, for Aunt Alexia was by report in those days not ill-looking in an Amazonian fashion, and possibly less deaf. Money they neither of them had, though each had something, and of course the General had his pension, for in the days when I remember him he had long turned his sword into a walking-stick, and had become a pillar of the club in a small watering-place.

Nothing restrained the General from his universal love-making; but by the time that I remember him it had become rather an affair of making compliments and eyes than of what he called "pushing the attack." Still, the old spirit lingered in him, for at a picnic, when a lady had got into some difficulty he turned to me and told me to go to her assistance, and when I, boy-like, said she did not seem to need my help, rejoined, "A woman always is in want of help, my boy . . . especially on occasions when there is no need of it." My aunt looked upon his vagaries leniently enough in those days,

though in the past they must have been of some annoyance to her, as I learned from another aunt of mine, whom report said the General had offended, either by making or not making love to her.

"My dear," said this good lady, "your Aunt Alexia has had a great deal to put up with from the General."

I could not help thinking that perhaps the General also had had something to put up with, but said nothing, knowing that if I did my aunt would not impart the information that was trembling on her tongue. "You see, my dear," she said, "your Aunt Alexia was one of those who understood when it was politic not to see everything." No one could possibly have accused my Aunt Margaret of not seeing everything. She was an Ogilvy, she used to say with pride, in the same way she might have stated she was vertebrate, and one of the mammalia, and certainly she could weigh a person in the balance and find him wanting at a glance.

Aunt Margaret resumed: "Your Aunt and General Hickman, a person whom I never liked, for I could not abide his airs and graces, respected and possibly loved each other, for now that all is past see what a happy pair they are. Still, dear, your Aunt Alexia once was young, although to look at her to-day . . ." Aunt Margaret was a good seven years senior to my other aunt, and took snuff freely, drying her handkerchiefs before the fire after the operation, and at no epoch of her life could possibly have been attractive; but still remained a woman at the heart in matters that affected others of her sex. "You know it is galling for a woman to have her husband running after everyone, even if you have a moustache yourself, my dear." I agreed, and she resumed: "Your aunt always kept up appearances, and I think, in her secret heart, was rather proud of the General's reputation in the abstract; but yet, my dear, no one likes concrete things, no matter what they say. Your Uncle Arthur, although he said he was a Buddhist, swore fearfully when he had an attack of gout. So, dear, when any of her friends—you know what fearful

gossips your dear Aunt Charlotte and your Cousin Rachel are—used to come to your Aunt Alexia with tales about her husband, she always said they were all lies. Still, like a prudent woman, she did not talk too much. You recollect our Scottish proverb, 'Juke and let the jaw gae by'?"

I thought my aunt kept, so to speak, her finger on the trigger for an unconscionable time; but knew that once primed she would fire at last and hit the bull's-eye, so I merely nodded, saying, "What a memory you have for proverbs, Aunt Margaret! Better than Sancho Panza, I believe." "Ah yes, Sancho," she rejoined, and set about to gather up the disjointed fibres of her tale.

"Where had I got to? Oh yes, your Aunt Alexia always kept a stout heart to a stae brae, as the saying is, and never noticed many a thing that perhaps was not worth the noticing. Perhaps she never saw, and what the eyes do not see the heart does not grieve for, so it may be that she was wise enough. Deaf people are hard to understand. You never know what or when they hear; but seeing is a different thing, and your aunt had a vision like a lynx. Well, well, the General was appointed to a command in India. In those days the passage round the Cape took ninety to a hundred days. All of a sudden he became so attentive to your aunt that everybody was surprised. He used to bring her flowers, and walk about with her just as he must have done before their honeymoon. Your Aunt Alexia never seemed at ease when, as she used to say, her husband was too French in his behaviour. Anyhow, the General said what could he do in India alone without his *chère petite Alexie*, and discoursed on the hardships of the voyage, for as the appointment was for a short time your aunt thought it was hardly worth her while to go so far afield. It was arranged that all good-byes were to be said at home. The General said he could not bear to see his wife standing upon the shore and waving a wet handkerchief . . . a woman with her pocket-handkerchief rolled up into a ball, red eyes, and hair flying in the wind . . . he used to say

décoiffée, but always translated it and every other French word that he used, for your Aunt Alexia spoke no language but her own."

My aunt turned towards me, and, looking at my expectant face, said: "I am not sure if it is altogether charitable to go on with my story, but it may serve you as a warning some day, so I will just go on." Aunt Margaret, being a Scotchwoman, had the saving gift of humour, so with a twinkle in her eye she went on with the story that she was bursting with desire to tell. "For several weeks—a voyage was a serious thing in those days—the General seemed to live down at the docks. He used to come back home to dinner worn out, as he said, with making proper preparations for his men. The soldier, he would say, lives through the stomach; feed him and he will follow you through fire; starve him and he will leave you in the lurch. Your Aunt Alexia, who I think had been captivated in the past by her husband's *bonhomie*, his easy manners, and his air of the complete man of the world, and who had always clung to him in spite of all his *fredaines*, as he called them, saying, 'Men will be men,' to which he answered, 'Yes, my life, and women women,' for he had no illusions as to woman's soulful love, now really began to respect him, as in her mind's eye she saw him labouring for the welfare of his men. As the time of sailing drew nearer day by day it seemed to Aunt Alexia as if she had been acting meanly in letting her husband take the voyage all alone. Though it had been agreed she should not come down to the ship to spare the General's feelings, and her own at parting, as the day of his departure drew near, whether she suspected anything or whether she thought she ought to go and see if he was comfortable on board, she took a sudden resolution and drove down to the docks upon the morning of the day before the vessel sailed. The steward met her at the gangway, and as he ushered her below remarked 'We was on the look-out for you, Mum; the General's had the cabin done up beautiful and only half an hour ago he sent a barrowful of flowers.' "

What my aunt thought no one but she herself could possibly have told; however, she was *varmint*, and made no sign, and quietly followed the steward down below.

The first glance round the cabin must have shown her how the land lay, for evidently the General did not contemplate a solitary voyage. Fresh chintz and flowers with plate and pictures gave the cabin an air as of a yacht, and two sea-cots standing beside each other, an air of domesticity unusual in the cabin of a transport in those far-distant days.

My aunt looked round as if she had expected everything just as she found it, said, "It is all very nice, though the fresh paint and varnish is a little overpowering. . . . Send me a cup of tea." The plan of her campaign must have sprung to her brain at once intuitively, as to the brain of a consummate general in the field, for, taking off her bonnet and her wrap, she wrote a letter, which she sent back by the cab. After an hour or two the cab returned bringing her boxes, which she instantly unpacked. In the afternoon the General came down, whistling a little air, to see that all was right before he went off home to take a tearful farewell of his wife. What passed between them when they found themselves together in the cabin none ever knew but the two principals, and they never divulged a word.

Later in the afternoon another cab arrived piled high with luggage, but a mysterious note handed in by the steward caused it to turn about and return silently to town. Early next morning the vessel put to sea, and as my aunt was a bad sailor, perhaps the General had an easier time for the first week than by all rights he had deserved. As the mysterious lady who was to have occupied the cot in which my aunt reposed had never shown herself aboard, matters remained in a vague condition of conjecture, and my Aunt Margaret when she told the story always declared that she thought Aunt Alexia most probably never let her husband really know that she suspected anything was wrong. How she explained her unexpected presence in the ship Aunt Margaret

had no idea, but she opined there must have been some awkward moments at the captain's table when conversation flagged, and when their cabin door was closed, and they retired to rest.

LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS

THERE is a plethora of talk, which seems to stop all thought, and by its ceaseless noise drive those who wish to think back on themselves. All talk, and no one listens, still less answers, for all must swell the general output of the chatter of the world. Bishops and Deans, with politicians, agitators, betting men, Women's Rights Advocates, members of Parliament, lawyers, nay even soldiers, sailors, the incredible average man, and most egregious superior person, must all be at it for their very lives. Still, talking serves a purpose, if only that of saving us from the dire tedium of our thoughts. Tobacco, sleep, narcotics, dice, cards, drink, horse-racing, women, and religion, with palmistry, thought-reading, the "occult," athletic sports, politics, all stand out ineffectual as consolers when compared to speech. What triumphs in the world can be compared to those speech gives?

The writer writes, toils, waits, publishes, and succeeds at last, but feels no flush of triumph like to that which the "cabotin," preacher, pleader, or mob orator enjoys when he perceives the eyes of the whole audience fixed upon him like a myriad of electric sparks; their ears drink in his words, and men and women, rich, poor, old, young, foolish, and wise alike, are bound together by the spell of speech. So after all it may be that, though silence is of silver, speech is purest gold. Pity that, being golden, it should be abused; but still to what base uses gold is put, and so of speech.

But be that as it may, let speech be only silver, silence gold, take but away our speech, chain us within the terror of ourselves by silence long enforced, and the most abject drivel of the sound business man, whose every thought is abject platitude, whose mind has never passed from the strict limits

of his villa and his counting-house, becomes as sweet as music to our ears. Let those who doubt try for a month to keep strict silence, never to speak, to hear and never dare to answer, to enchain their thoughts, their wishes, their desires, passions, anxieties, affections, regrets, remorses, anger, hatreds, loves—in brief, to leave the gamut of that inner life which makes a man, with all the notes untouched. Whilst listening to a painful preacher, sitting out a play, endeavouring to understand in Parliament what a dull speaker thinks he means to say, the thought creeps in, why teach the dumb to speak? Why rive away from them that which at first sight seems the chief blessing, want of speech, and so enable them to set their folly forth, and talk themselves down fools. Then comes experience, experience that stands as a divinity to reasoning men, and clamours out: Nay, let them speak although they know not what they say; their speech may strike a chord they know not of in some man's heart.

Think on a silent world, a world in which men walked about in all respects equipped with every organ, every sense, but without speech. They might converse by signs as Indians do upon the trail, but I maintain no city of tremendous night could be more awful than the horror of a speechless world. Never to speak, only to find our tongues in agony of fear, as horses tied within a burning stable, dumb idiots in great peril of their lives, or, as the animal under curare, upon the vivisector's bench (calling to man who should be as his God), give out occasionally some horrid sound, and even then know it would be unheard. Shepherds upon the hills, men in a cattle puesto in La Plata, hut keepers in Australia, the Gambusino straying amongst the valleys of the Sierra Madre, Arab rekass, monks, fishermen, lighthouse-keepers, and the poor educated man lost in the crowded solitude of London, all know of silence and its fears. Still they can talk if only to themselves, sing, whistle, speak to their animals, look at the sea, the desert, scan the immeasurable brown of pampas, the green of prairie, or the dull duskiness of bush,

or if in London launch into objurgation on mankind, knowing that if they objurgate enough some one will answer, for we Britons cannot stand reproaches, knowing that we are just. An inward something seems to assure us of our righteousness, and all we do is never done as it is done in other and less favoured lands, from impulse, prejudice, or hurriedly, but well thought out, and therefore as inexorably unjust in the working as is fate itself. Let speech be golden, silver, diffusive, tedious, flippant, deceptive, corrupting, somnolent, evasive, let it be what you will, it is the only medium by which we can assert that majesty which some folks tell us is inherent in mankind, but which the greater part of us (from democratic sentiment perchance) rarely allow to creep into the light of day; it is the only humanising influence innate in men, and thus it seems unwise to put restraint upon it, except in Parliament. Chained dogs, parrots in cages, squirrels within their stationary bicycles, gold fish in globes, wild animals behind their bars, monkeys tied to an organ dressed in their little red woollen gowns (the fashion never changes), bears fastened to a Savoyard, camels on which climb multitudinous bands of children, elephants accompanied by a miserable "native" tramping about with tons of tourists on their backs, move me to wrath, and set me thinking what is it they can have done in an anterior state to undergo such treatment, and whether they were men who must as beasts thus expiate their crimes of lèse-majesté against the animals. Yet they are not condemned to silence, and perchance may fabulate at night or when their keepers sleep, or lie drunk, and in their ratiocination exhale their cares.

No, silence is reserved for men who have offended against the hazy principles of right and wrong, or over-stepped that ever-shifting frontier line, never too well defined, and which advancing toleration—that toleration which shall some day lighten life—may soon obliterate, or, if not quite obliterate, yet render the return across the line more feasible than now. When one considers it, how crass it is to shut men up in vast

hotels, withdrawing them from any possible influence which might ever change their lives, and to confine them in a white-washed cell, with windows of Dutch glass, gas, and a Bible, table, chair, little square salt-box, wooden spoon, tin pan, schedule of rules, hell in their hearts, a pound of oakum in their hands, condemned to silence and to count the days, pricking them off under the ventilator with a bent nail or pin!

Well was it said, the only humanizing influence in a prison comes from the prisoners. Let the officials do their duty as they think they should, the governor be humane, the doctor know a little of his work, the chaplain not too inept, still prisoners of whatever rank or class, imprisoned for whatever crime, offence, or misdemeanour, look on each other as old friends after a day or two within the prison walls. Day follows day with "skilly," exercise, with chapel, with dreary dullness, and with counting hours. Night follows night, and when the light goes out the tramping up and down the cells begin, the rappings, and the mysterious code by which the prisoners communicate, sound through the building like an imprisoned woodpecker tapping to be free; tremendous nights of eight and forty hours, a twisting, turning, rising oft, and lying down to rise again, of watching, counting up to a million, walking about and touching every separate article; of thinking upon every base action of one's life, of breaking out a-cursing like a drab; then falling to a fitful, unrefreshing sleep which seems to last but for a minute, and then the morning bell.

Happier by far the men who, in my youth in Spain, fished with a basket from the window for alms from passers-by smoked, drank, and played cars, talked to their friends; whose wives and sisters brought them food in baskets, sat talking to them from outside, talked all day long, and passed the time of day with other citizens who walked the streets, read newspapers, and were known to other men as the "unhappy ones." A hell on earth you say, contaminating in-

fluences, murderers and petty thieves, with forgers, shoplifters and debtors all together. At most a hell within a hell, and for the influence for good or ill, I take it that the communion of the sinners was at least as tolerable as we can hope to find (should we attain it) the communion of the saints. Philosophers can theorise to good effect as to the probability of other worlds, the atmosphere of Mars, the Delphic E, the Atomic Theory, the possible perfectibility of the pneumatic tyre, on form, style, taste, or forms of government, on Socialism, Anarchy, the Trinity, on Cosmic Theism, Gnosticism, or the cessation of direct divine interposition in affairs sublunary, discuss their theories and the muzzling of their dogs, weave their philosophies (no man regarding them), invent their faiths, destroy them, and set to work again in the construction of new faiths just as ridiculous as the faiths destroyed; but when they come to theorise upon the treatment of mankind, all their acumen straight evaporates.

But leaving theorists weaving the ropes to hang themselves spun from the cobwebs of their minds, and coming back to practice and to common sense—that common sense which makes so foolish most things that we do. A recent essayist fresh from his Malebolge has set forth all that men suffer shut within the silence of themselves, has written down the lesson that a man gains from the companionship of those who no doubt are in general not much more guilty than judges, jailers, their chaplains, warders, or than ourselves who sit forgetting that our neglect entailed on them the lack of opportunity.

Well has he spoken of the humility of prisoners, their cheerfulness, compassion for one another, well described the circling miserable ring of lame folk, aged men, those on the sick list, and the rest, who in the prison yard revolve in a small circle round a post, too feeble to keep pace with the robuster rogues at exercise. I see them, too (can do so any time I close my eyes), in their long shoddy greatcoats, thin, pale, abject as dogs, purposeless, shiftless, self-abased, down-

eyed, and shuffling in the prison shoes; expectorating, coughing, and a jest to those who trot around the ring stamping and cursing underneath their breath, what time the warders stand blowing their fingers, side arms belted on, stiff and immovable, and on the watch to pounce upon a contravention of the rules. But whilst the quondam humorist now turned moraliser has left his faithful picture of the misery of those he lived amongst for two long years, he has omitted to set down the one event of prison life which breaks the dull monotony of weeks and days, and lets men feel for a brief space that they are men once more.

The dull week over, oakum all duly picked, cells well swept out, the skilly and brown bread discussed, beds all rolled up, the inspection over, faces all washed, with clean checked handkerchiefs (coarse as the topsail of a sugar droger) duly served out to last the week, the terrors of the bath encountered, the creepy silence of the vast unmurmuring hive is broken by the Sabbath bell. Then cells give up their dead, and corridors are full of the pale skilly-fed shuffling crowd, each headed by its warder, and every man with something of anticipation in his eye, ready to march to church. To the vast chapel streams the voiceless crowd, and soon each seat is filled, a warder duly placed at each bench end to see the worshippers do not engage in speculations as to the nature of the Trinity, but stand and kneel and sit, do everything in fact that other congregations do, omitting only the due dumping of the threepenny bit into the plate, and not forgetting that when two or three are gathered thus to pray, their Creator stands amongst them, although they all are thieves. And thus assembled in their hundreds, to make their prayer before the God of Prisons, the congregation sits —prisoners and captives, shut within themselves, and each man tortured by the thought that those outside have lost him from their minds. The chapel built in a semi-circle, with the back seats gradually rising, so that all may be in view, the pulpit made of deal and varnished brown, the organ cased in

deal, and for all ornament, over the altar the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Ten Commandments, and those last look at the congregation as if ironically, and seem designed to fill the place of prison rules for all mankind. Furtively Bill greets Jack, and 'Enery, George: "'Ow are yer blokes? Another bloomin' week gone past." "I ain't a-talkin', Sir, 'twas t'other bloke," and a mysterious twitch makes itself felt from bench to bench till the whole chapel thus has said good-day. Loud peals the voluntary, the convicted organist—some thievish schoolmaster or poor bank clerk having made (according to himself) a slight mistake in counting out some notes—attacks an organ fugue, making wrong notes, drawing out all the stops alternately, keeping the vox humana permanently on, and plays and plays and plays till a grim warder stalks across the floor and bids him cease. "Dearly Beloved" seemed a little forced, our daily skilly scarce a matter worth much thanks, the trespasses of others we forgave thinking our own were all wiped out by our mere presence in the place, the Creed we treated as a subject well thrashed out, "Prisoners and Captives" made us all feel bad, the litany we roared out like a chant, calling upon the Lord to hear us in voices that I feel He must have heard; epistle, gospel, collects we endured, sitting as patiently as toads in mud, all waiting for the hymn. The chaplain names it, and the organ roars, the organist rocks in his chair, on every brow the perspiration starts, all hands are clenched, and no one dares to look his neighbour in the eyes; then like an earthquake the pent-up sound breaks forth, the chapel quivers like a ship from stem to stern, dust flies, and loud from every throat the pious doggerel peals. And in the sounds the prison melts away, the doors are opened, and each man sits in his home surrounded by his friends, his Sunday dinner smokes, his children all clean washed are by his side, and so we sing, lift up our hearts and roar vociferously (praising some kind of God), shaken inside and out, yelling, perspiring, shouting each other down. Old lags and forgers, area sneaks, burglars, cheats,

swindlers, confidence-trick men, horse thieves, and dog stealers, men in for rape, for crimes of violence, assault and battery, with "smashers," swell mobsmen, blackmailers, all the vilest of the vile, no worse perhaps if all were known than are the most immaculate of all the good, made human once again during the sixteen verses of the hymn, and all the miseries of the past week wiped out in the brief exercise of unusual speech. The sixteen verses over, we sit down, and for a moment look at one another just in the same way as the worshippers are wont to do in St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, or St. Peter's, Eaton Square.

"Does you good, No. 8, the bloomin' 'ymn," an old lag says, but for the moment dazed by the ceasing of the noise, as Bernal Diaz says he was when the long tumult ended and Mexico was won, I do not answer, but at length deal him a friendly kick and think the sixteen verses of the hymn were all too short.

So in a side street when the frequent loafer sidles up, and says mysteriously: "Gawd bless yer, chuck us 'arf a pint; I was in with you in that crooil plaice," I do so, not that I think he speaks the truth nor yet imagine that the prison, large though it was, contained two million prisoners, but to relieve his thirst and for the sake of those condemned to silence, there "inside," and for the recollection of the "bloomin' 'ymn."

MIST IN MENTEITH

SOME say the name Menteith meant a peat moss in Gaelic, and certainly peat mosses fill a third of the whole vale. However that may be, its chiefest attribute is mist. Shadows in summer play on the faces of the hills, and snow in winter spreads a cold carpet over the brown moss; but the mist stays the longest with us, and under it the semi-Highland, semi-Lowland valley puts on its most familiar air.

When billowing waves wreathe round the hills, and by degrees encroach upon the low, flat moors, they shroud the district from the world, as if they wished to keep it from all prying eyes, safe and inviolate. Summer and spring and winter all have their charms, either when the faint green of the baulked vegetation of the north breaks out, tender yet vivid, or when the bees buzz in the heather in the long days of the short, nightless summer, or when the streams run noiselessly under their shroud of ice in a hard frost. The autumn brings the rain, soaking and blurring everything. Leaves blotch and blacken, then fall swirling down on to the sodden earth.

On trees and stones, from fences, from the feals upon the tops of dykes, a beady moisture oozes, making them look as if they had been frosted. When all is ready for them, the mists sweep down and cover everything; from the interior of the darkness comes the cries of wild ducks, of herons as they sit upon the trees, and of geese passing overhead. Inside the wreaths of mist another world seems to have come into existence, something distinct from and antagonistic to mankind. When the mist once descends, blotting out the familiar features of the landscape, leaving perhaps the Rock of Stirling floating in the air, the three black trees upon the bare rock of the Fairy Hill growing from nothing, or the peak of the Cobbler, seeming to peer above enormous mountain

ranges, though in reality nothing more vast than the long shoulder of Ben Lomond intervenes, the change has come that gives Menteith its special character.

There are mists all the world over, and in Scotland in particular; mists circling round the Western Islands, filling the glens and boiling in the corries of the hills mists that creep out to sea or in towards the land from seawards, threatening and dreadful-looking; but none like ours, so impalpable and strange, and yet so fitting to our low, flat mosses with our encircling hills. In older days they sheltered the marauders from the north, who in their gloom fell on the valley as if they had sprung from the night, plundered and burned and harried, and then retreated under cover of the mist, back to their fastnesses.

As they came through the Glen of Glenny, or the old road behind Ben Dhu, which comes out just a little east of Invertrossachs, when the wind blew aside the sheltering wreaths of steam, and the rare gleams of sun fell on the shaggy band, striking upon the heads of their Lochaber axes, and again shifted and covered them from sight, they must have seemed a phantom army, seen in a dream, just between consciousness and sleep.

The lake, with its three islands, its giant chestnuts, now stag-headed and about to fall, the mouldering priory, the long church with its built-up, five-light window, the castle, overgrown with brushwood, and with a tree springing up from the middle hall, the heronry the rope of sand the fairies twisted, which would have made a causeway to the island had they not stopped just in the nick of time, the single tree that marks the gallows, and the old churchyard of the Port, all these the mist invests with a peculiar charm that they lack when the sun shines and shows them merely mouldering ruins and decaying trees.

So of the Flanders Moss. It, too, in mist seems to roll on for miles; its healthy surface turns to long waves that play against the foot of the low range of hills, and beat upon

Craigforth as if it were an island in the sea. Through wreaths of steam, the sullen Forth winds in and out between the peat hags, and when a slant of wind leaves it clear for an instant it looks mysterious and dark, as might a stream of quick-silver running down from a mine. When a fish leaps, the sound re-echoes like a bell, as it falls back into the water, and rings spread out till they are lost beneath the banks.

After a day or two of gloom life begins somehow or another to be charged with mystery; and, walking through the woods, instinctively you look about half in alarm as a roe bounds away, or from a fir-tree a capercailizie drums or flies off with a noise as if a moose was bursting through the trees.

Peat-smoke floats through the air from cottages a mile away, acrid and penetrating, and fills the nostrils with its scent. The little streams run with a muffled tinkle as if they wished to hide away from sight; rank, yellow ragweeds on their banks, bowed down with the thick moisture, all hang their heads as if they mourned for the lost sunshine and the day. Now and then leaves flutter down slowly to the ground like dying butterflies. Over the whole earth hangs, as it were, a sounding-board, intensifying everything, making the senses more acute, and carrying voices from a distance, focussed to the ear.

So through our mists a shepherd's dog barking a mile off, is heard as loudly as if it were a yard or two away, although the sound comes slowly to the hearing, as when old-fashioned guns hung fire and the report appeared to reach one through a veil. Thus does the past, with its wild legends, the raiders from the north, the Broken Men, the Saxon's Leap, the battles of the Grahams and the McGregors, come down to us veiled by the mist of time. In the lone churchyards, whose grass is always damp the whole year round, whose earth, when a new grave is dug, is always wet, so wet that not a stone rolls from it to the grass; the tombstones, with the lettering overgrown with lichens, only preserve the names of the old enemies who now lie side by side, in a faint shadowy

way. The sword that marks the resting-place of the men of the most turbulent of all the races of that borderland is usually only the shadow of a sword, so well the mist has done its work, rounding off edges and obliterating chisel marks.

Boats on the Loch o' the Port, with oars muffled by the cloud of vapour that broods upon the lake, glide in and out of the thick curtain spread between the earth and sky, the figure of the standing fisher in the stern looming gigantic as he wields his rod in vain; for, in the calm, even the water-spiders leave a ripple as they run. In the low, mossy "parks" that lose themselves in beds of bulrushes before they join the lake, the Highland cattle stand at gaze, the damp congealing on their coats in whitish beadlets, and horses hang their heads disconsolately, for no matter in what climate they are born, horses are creatures of the sun. Under the shroud of gloom it seems that something strange is going on, something impalpable that gives the valley of Menteith its own peculiar air of sadness, as if no summer sun, no winter frost, no fierce March winds, or the chill cold of April, could ever really dry the tears of moisture that it lays up under the autumn mist. So all our walls are decked with a thick coating of grey lichen on the weather side that looks like flakes of leather, and on the lee side with a covering of bright, green moss.

Thatch moulders, and from it springs a growth of vegetation; a perpetual dripping from the eaves opens a little rill below it, in which the pebbles glisten as in a mountain stream.

Along the roads the scanty traffic rumbles fitfully, and on the Sabbath, down the steep path towards the little church, knots of fantastic figures seem to stalk like threatening phantoms. When they draw near, one sees that they were but the familiar faces of McKerrochar of Cullamoon, Graham of Tombreak, Campbell of Rinaclach, and Finaly Mitchell, dressed in their Sunday clothes. They pass the time of day, daunder a little in the damp kirkyard, so heaped with graves they have to pick their way between them just as sheep pick

their way and follow one another on a steep mountain path, or when they cross a burn.

Although their talk runs on their daily life—the price of beasts at the last market or the tryst, upon bad seasons and the crops, all in the compassed and depreciatory vein characteristic of their calling and their race, they once have been fantastic figures towering above the dry-stone dykes that edge the road. That glory nothing can take away from them, or from the valley where they dwell.

Nothing is stable. Snows melt and rain gives place to sun, and sun to rain again; spring melts into summer, then autumn blends insensibly with winter, and the year is out. Men come and go, the Saxon speech replaces Gaelic; even traditions insensibly are lost.

The trees decay and fall, then they lie prone like the great hollow chestnut trunks, blackened by tourists' fires, in Inchmahome. Our hills and valleys all have changed their shapes under the action either of fire or ice. Life, faiths, ideals, all have changed. The Flanders Moss that was a sea is now crossed by a railway and by innumerable roads. What, then, shall we who have seen mists rising up all our lives, feared them as children, loved them in riper years, cling to, but mist?

Refuge of our wild ancestors, moulder of character, inspirer of the love of mystery, chief characteristic of the Keltic mind, spirit that watches over hills and valleys, lochs, clachans, bealachs and shaggy baadans, essence compounded of the water of the sky and earth, impalpable, dark and threatening, Fingal and Bran and Ossian, and he who in outstretching Ardnamurchan strung his harp to bless the birlinn of Clanranald, all have disappeared in thy grey folds.

Whether thou art death stealing amongst us, veiled, or life concealed behind a curtain, or but an emanation from the ground, which the poor student, studying in Aberdeen, working by day upon the wharves and poring over books at night, can explain as easily as he can solve all other mysteries,

with his science primer, who shall say?

All that I know is that when the mantle of the damp rolls down upon us, battling with the rough oak copse upon Ben Dearch or Craigmore till all is swallowed up and a smooth surface stretches out over what, but half an hour before, was a thick wood of gnarled and secular trees that stood like piles stand up in an embankment, eaten by the sea, the mist has conquered.

Somehow, I think, its victory brings a sense of rest.

BEATTOCK FOR MOFFAT

THE bustle on the Euston platform stopped for an instant to let the men who carried him to the third-class compartment pass along the train. Gaunt and emaciated, he looked just at death's door, and, as they propped him in the carriage between two pillows, he faintly said: "Jock, do ye think I'll live as far as Moffat? I should na' like to die in London in the smoke."

His cockney wife, drying her tears with a cheap hem-stitched pocket handkerchief, her scanty town-bred hair looking like wisps of tow beneath her hat, bought from some window in which each individual article was marked at seven-and-sixpence, could only sob. His brother, with the country sun and wind burn still upon his face, and his huge hands hanging like hams in front of him, made answer.

"Andra'," he said, "gin ye last as far as Beattock, we'll gie ye a braw hurl back to the farm, syne the bask air, ye ken, and the milk, and, and—but can ye last as far as Beattock, Andra'?"

The sick man, sitting with the cold sweat upon his face, his shrunken limbs looking like sticks inside his ill-made black slop suit, after considering the proposition on its merits, looked up, and said: "I should na' like to bet I feel fair boss, God knows; but there, the mischief of it is, he will na' tell ye, so that, as ye may say, his knowlidge has na commercial value. I ken I look as gash as Garscadden. Ye mind, Jock, in the braw auld times, when the auld laird just slipped awa', whiles they were birlin' at the clairet. A braw death, Jock . . . do ye think it'll be rainin' aboot Ecclefechan? Aye . . . sure to be rainin' aboot Lockerbie. Nae Christians there, Jock, a' Johnstones and Jardines, ye mind?"

The wife, who had been occupied with an air cushion,

and, having lost the bellows, had been blowing into it till her cheeks seemed almost bursting, and her false teeth were loosened in her head, left off her toil to ask her husband "If 'e could pick a bit of something, a porkpie, or a nice sausage roll, or something tasty," which she could fetch from the refreshment room. The invalid having declined to eat, and his brother having drawn from his pocket a dirty bag, in which were peppermints, gave him a "drop," telling him that he "minded he aye used to like them weel, when the meenister had fairly got into his prelection in the auld kirk, outby."

The train slid almost imperceptibly away, the passengers upon the platform looking after it with that half-foolish, half-astonished look with which men watch a disappearing train. Then a few sandwich papers rose with the dust almost to the level of the platform, sank again, the clock struck twelve, and the station fell into a half quiescence, like a volcano in the interval between the lava showers. Inside the third-class carriage all was quiet until the lights of Harrow shone upon the left, when the sick man, turning himself with difficulty, said: "Good-bye, Harrow-on-the-Hill. I aye liked Harrow for the hill's sake, tho' ye can scarcely ca' yon wee bit mound a hill, Jean."

His wife, who, even in her grief, still smarted under the Scotch variant of her name, which all her life she had pronounced as "Jayne," and who, true cockney as she was, bounded her world within the lines of Plaistow, Peckham Rye, the Welsh 'Arp ('Endon way), and Willesden, moved uncomfortably at the depreciation of the chief mountain in her cosmos, but held her peace. Loving her husband in a sort of half-antagonistic fashion, born of the difference of type between the hard, unyielding, yet humorous and sentimental Lowland Scot, and the conglomerate of all races of the island which meet in London, and produce the weedy, shallow breed, almost incapable of reproduction, and yet high-strung and nervous, there had arisen between them that intangible veil of misconception which, though not excluding

love, is yet impervious to respect. Each saw the other's failings, or, perhaps, thought the good qualities which each possessed were faults, for usually men judge each other by their good points, which, seen through prejudice of race, religion, and surroundings, appear to them defects.

The brother, who but a week ago had left his farm unwillingly, just when the "neeps were wantin' heughin' and a feck of' things requirin' to be done, forby a puckle sheep waitin' for keelin'," to come and see his brother for the last time, sat in that dour and seeming apathetic attitude which falls upon the country man, torn from his daily toil, and plunged into a town. Most things in London, during the brief intervals he had passed away from the sick-bed, seemed foolish to him, and of a nature such as a self-respecting Moffat man, in the hebdomadal enjoyment of the "prelections" of a Free Church minister could not authorise.

"Man, saw ye e'er a carter sittin' on his cart, and drivin' at a trot, instead o' walkin' in a proper manner alangside his horse?" had been his first remark.

The short-tailed sheep dogs, and the way they worked, the inferior quality of the cart-horses, their shoes with hardly any calkins worth the name, all was repugnant to him.

On Sabbath, too, he had received a shock, for, after walking miles to sit under the "brither of the U.P. minister at Symington," he had found Erastian hymn books in the pews, and noticed with stern reprobation that the congregation stood to sing, and that, instead of sitting solidly whilst the "man wrastled in prayer," stooped forward in the fashion called the Nonconformist lounge.

His troubled spirit had received refreshment from the sermon, which, though short, and extending to but some five-and-forty minutes, had still been powerful, for he said:

"When yon wee, shilpit meenister—brither, ye ken, of rantin' Ferguson, out by Symington—shook the congregation ower the pit mouth, ye could hae fancied that the very

sowls in hell just girned. Man, he garred the very stour to flee aboot the kirk, and, hadna' the big book been weel brass-banded, he would hae dang the haricles fair oot."

So the train slipped past Watford, swaying round the curves like a gigantic serpent, and jolting at the facing points as a horse "pecks" in his gallop at an obstruction in the ground.

The moon shone brightly into the compartment, extinguishing the flickering of the half-candle power electric light. Rugby, the station all lit up, and with its platforms occupied but by a few belated passengers, all muffled up like race-horses taking their exercise, flashed past. They slipped through Cannock Chase, which stretches down with heath and firs, clear brawling streams, and birch trees, an outpost of the north lost in the midland clay. They crossed the oily Trent, flowing through alder copses, and with its backwaters all overgrown with lilies, like an aguapey in Paraguay or in Brazil.

The sick man, wrapped in cheap rugs, and sitting like Guy Fawkes, in the half-comic, half-pathetic way that sick folk sit, making them sport for fools, and, at the same time, moistening the eye of the judicious, who reflect that they themselves may one day sit as they do, bereft of all the dignity of strength, looked listlessly at nothing as the train sped on. His loving, tactless wife, whose cheap "sized" handkerchief had long since become a rag with mopping up her tears, endeavoured to bring round her husband's thoughts to paradise, which she conceived a sort of music hall, where angels sat with their wings folded, listening to sentimental songs.

Her brother-in-law, reared on the fiery faith of Moffat Calvinism, eyed her with great disfavour, as a terrier eyes a rat imprisoned in a cage.

"Jean wumman," he burst out, "to hear ye talk, I would jist think your meenister had been a perfectly illeeterate man, pairadise here, pairadise there, what do ye think a man like Andra' could dae daunderin' aboot a gairden naked, pu'in' soor aipples frae the trees?"

Cockney and Scotch conceit, impervious alike to outside criticism, and each so bolstered in its pride as to be quite incapable of seeing that anything existed outside the purlieus of their sight, would soon have made the carriage into a battlefield, had not the husband, with the authority of approaching death, put in his word.

"Whist, Jeanie wumman. Jock, dae ye no ken that the Odium-Theologicum is just a curse—pairadise—set ye baith up—pairadise. I dinna' even richtly ken if I can last as far as Beattock."

Stafford, its iron furnaces belching out flames, which burned red holes into the night, seemed to approach, rather than be approached, so smoothly ran the train. The mingled moonlight and the glare of iron-works lit the canal beside the railway, and from the water rose white vapours as from Styx or Periphlegethon. Through Cheshire ran the train, its timbered houses showing ghastly in the frost which coated all the carriage windows, and rendered them opaque. Preston, the Catholic city, lay silent in the night, its river babbling through the public park, and then the hills of Lancashire loomed lofty in the night. Past Garstang, with its water-lily-covered ponds, Garstang where, in the days gone by, Catholic squires, against their will, were forced on Sundays to "take wine" in Church on pain of fine, the puffing serpent slid.

The talk inside the carriage had given place to sleep, that is, the brother-in-law and wife slept fitfully, but the sick man looked out, counting the miles to Moffat, and speculating on his strength. Big drops of sweat stood on his forehead, and his breath came double, whistling through his lungs.

They passed by Lancaster, skirting the sea on which the moon shone bright, setting the fishing boats in silver as they lay scarcely moving on the waves. Then, so to speak, the train set its face up against Shap Fell, and, puffing heavily, drew up into the hills, the scattered grey stone houses of the north, flanked by their gnarled and twisted ash trees, hanging

upon the edge of the streams, as lonely, and as cut off from the world (except the passing train) as they had been in Central Africa. The moorland roads, winding amongst the heather, showed that the feet of generations had marked them out, and not the line, spade, and theodolite, with all the circumstance of modern road makers. They, too, looked white and unearthly in the moonlight, and now and then a sheep, aroused by the snorting of the train, moved from the heather into the middle of the road, and stood there motionless, its shadow filling the narrow track, and flickering on the heather at the edge.

The keen and penetrating air of the hills and night roused the two sleepers, and they began to talk, after the Scottish fashion, of the funeral, before the anticipated corpse.

"Ye ken, we've got a braw new hearse outby, sort of Epescopalian lookin', we' gless a' roond, so's ye can see the kist. Very conceity too, they mak' the hearses noo-a-days. I min' when they were jist auld sort o' ruckly boxes, awfu' licht, ye ken, upon the springs, and just went dodderin' alang, the body swingin' to and fro, as if it would flee richt oot. The roads, ye ken, were no high hand so richtly metalled in thae days."

The subject of the conversation took it cheerfully, expressing pleasure at the advance of progress as typefied in the new hearse, hoping his brother had a decent "stan' o' black," and looking at his death, after the fashion of his kind, as it were something outside himself, a fact indeed, on which, at the same time, he could express himself with confidence as being in some measure interested. His wife, not being Scotch, took quite another view, and seemed to think that the mere mention of the word was impious, or, at the least, of such a nature as to bring on immediate dissolution, holding the English theory that unpleasant things should not be mentioned, and that, by this means, they can be kept at bay. Half from affection, half from the inborn love of cant, inseparable from the true Anglo-Saxon, she

endeavoured to persuade her husband that he looked better, and yet would mend, once in his native air.

"At Moffit, ye'd 'ave the benefit of the 'ill breezes, and that 'ere country milk, which never 'as no cream in it, but 'olesome, as you say. Why yuss, in about eight days at Moffit, you'll be as 'earty as you ever was. Yuss, you will, you take my word."

Like a true Londoner, she did not talk religion, being too thin in mind and body even to have grasped the dogma of the sects. Her Heaven a music 'all, her paradise to see the king drive through the streets, her literary pleasure to read lies in newspapers, or pore on novelettes, which showed her the pure elevated lives of duchesses, placing the knaves and prostitutes within the limits of her own class; which view of life she accepted as quite natural, and as a thing ordained to be by the bright stars who write.

Just at the Summit they stopped an instant to let a goods train pass, and, in a faint voice, the consumptive said: "I'd almost lay a wager now I'd last to Moffat, Jock. The Shap, ye ken, I aye looked at as the beginning of the run home. The hills, ye ken, are sort o' heartsome. No that they're bonny hills like Moffat hills, na', na', ill-shapen sort of things, just like Borunty tatties, awfu' puir names too, Shap Fell and Rowland Edge, Hutton Roof Crags, and Arnside Fell; heard ever ony body sich like names for hills? Naething to fill the mooth; man, the Scotch hills jist grap ye in the mooth for a' the world like speerits."

They stopped at Penrith, which the old castle walls make even meaner, in the cold morning light, than other stations look. Little Salkeld, and Armathwaite, Cotehill, and Scotby all rushed past, and the train, slackening, stopped with a jerk upon the platform, at Carlisle. The sleepy porters bawled out "change for Maryport," some drovers slouched into carriages, kicking their dogs before them, and, slamming-to the doors, exchanged the time of day with others of their tribe, all carrying ash or hazel sticks, all red-faced and keen-eyed, their

caps all crumpled, and their greatcoat-tails all creased, as if their wearers had lain down to sleep full dressed, so as to lose no time in getting to the labours of the day. The old red sandstone church, with something of a castle in its look, as well befits a shrine close to a frontier where in days gone by the priest had need to watch and pray, frowned on the passing train; and on the manufactories, whose banked-up fires sent poisonous fumes into the air, withering the trees which, in the public park, a careful council had hedged round about with wire.

The Eden ran from bank to bank, its water swirling past as wildly as when "The Bauld Buccleugh" and his Moss Troopers, bearing "the Kinmount" fettered in their midst, plunged in and passed it, whilst the keen Lord Scroope stood on the brink amazed and motionless. Gretna, so close to England, and yet a thousand miles away in speech and feeling, found the sands now flying through the glass. All through the mosses which once were the "Debatable Land" on which the moss-troopers of the clan Graeme were used to hide the cattle stolen from the "auncient enemy," the now repatriated Scotchman murmured feebly "that it was bonny scenery" although a drearier prospect of "moss hags" and stunted birch trees is not to be found. At Ecclefechan he just raised his head, and faintly spoke of "yon auld carle, Carlyle, ye ken, a dour thrawn body, but a gran' pheelosopher," and then lapsed into silence, broken by frequent struggles to take breath.

His wife and brother sat still, and eyed him as a cow watches a locomotive engine pass, amazed and helpless, and he himself had but the strength to whisper: "Jock, I'm dune; I'll no' see Moffat, blast it, yon smoke, ye ken, yon London smoke has been ower muckle for ma lungs."

The tearful, helpless wife, not able even to pump up the harmful and unnecessary conventional lie, which after all consoles only the liar, sat pale and limp, chewing the fingers of her Berlin gloves. Upon the weather-beaten cheek of Jock

glistened a tear, which he brushed off as angrily as it had been a wasp.

"Aye, Andra'," he said, "I would hae liket awfu' weel that ye should win to Moffat. Man, the rowan trees are a' in bloom, and there's a bonny breer upon the corn—aye, ou aye, the reid bogs are lookin'-gran'-the year—but Andra', I'll tak' ye east to the auld kirk yaird, ye'll na' ken onything aboot it, but we'll hae a heartsome funeral."

Lockerbie seemed to fly towards them, and the dying Andra' smiled as his brother pointed out the place and said: "Ye mind, there are na' ony Christians in it" and answered: "Aye, I mind, naething but Jardines," as he fought for breath.

The death dews gathered on his forehead as the train shot by Nethercleugh, passed Wamphray, and Dinwoodie, and with a jerk pulled up at Beattock just at the summit of the pass.

So in the cold spring morning light, the fine rain beating on the platform, as the wife and brother got their almost speechless care out of the carriage, the brother whispered: "Dam't, ye've done it, Andra', here's Beattock; I'll tak' ye east to Moffat yet to dee."

But on the platform, huddled on the bench to which he had been brought, Andra' sat speechless and dying in the rain. The doors banged to, the guard stepping in lightly as the train flew past, and a belated porter shouted, "Beattock, Beattock for Moffat," and then, summoning his last strength, Andra' smiled, and whispered faintly in his brother's ear: "Aye, Beattock—for Moffat?" Then his head fell back, and a faint bloody foam oozed from his pallid lips. His wife stood crying helplessly, the rain beating upon the flowers of her cheap hat, rendering it shapeless and ridiculous. But Jock, drawing out a bottle, took a short dram and saying, "Andra', man, ye made a richt gude fecht o' it," snorted an instant in a red pocket handkerchief, and calling up a boy, said: "Rin, Jamie, to the toon, and tell McNicol to send up and fetch a corp." Then, after helping to remove the body to the

waiting-room, walked out into the rain, and, whistling "Corn Rigs" quietly between his teeth lit up his pipe, and muttered as he smoked: "A richt gude fecht—man aye, ou aye, a game yin Andra', puir felly. Weel, weel, he'll hae a braw hurl onyway in the new Moffat hearse."

AUNT ELEANOR

THERE are no aunts to-day like my Aunt Eleanor. Either the world is no more fitted for them, or else they are not fitted to the world; but none of them remain.

Scotland and Yorkshire strove together in her blood, making a compound, whimsical and strange, kind and ungracious, foolish and yet endowed with a shrewd common sense, which kept her safe, during the lengthened period of her life, from all the larger follies, whilst still permitting her to give full run to minor eccentricities, both in speech, deed and dress.

Tall, thin, and willowy, and with a skin like parchment, which gave her face, when worked upon by a slight rictus in the nose she suffered from, a look, as of a horse about to kick, she had an air, when you first saw her, almost disquieting, it was so different from anything, or anybody that you had ever met.

She never seemed to age, although no doubt time did not stop the clock for her during the thirty years she was a landmark in my life. Perhaps it was her glossy, dark-brown hair, which, parted in the middle and kept in place by a thin band of velvet, never was tinged with grey, not even in extreme old age, that made her ever young.

Perhaps it was her clothes, which for those five-and-thirty years (I cannot swear it was not forty) were invariable, that made her never change.

Her uniform, for so I styled it, it was so steadfast, was, in the winter, a black silk, sprigged, as she would have said herself, with little trees, and in the summer, on fine days, a lilac poplin, which she called "laylock," surmounted by a Rampore Chudda immaculately white.

Her cap was generally adorned with cherry-coloured

ribbons. Perched on her head, as if it were a crown, moral and physical, of virginity, it used to have a strange attraction for me when it trembled, now and then, making the ribbons shake, as she reproved a servant, or signified her disapproval of some necessary change. The youngest of a large family, whose members all were cleverer than she, until death set her free by taking off her sisters, she had been held a fool. Not that the imputation ever stopped her for a moment from having her own way; but only laid her open to the comments of the other members of the family, which she accepted, just as a shepherd or a sailor always accepts bad weather, without a murmur, and with a sense as of superiority to fate.

In all her sisters the Scottish strain prevailed. They spoke, not in broad Scots, but with the intonation that sounds like the whine a bagpipe gives when the player, after a pibroch, or a lament, allows the bag to empty slowly of the wind. Their mental attitude was that which their stern Scottish faith gave to its votaries. Even in Scotland it is now unknown, leaving the world the poorer by the extinction of a type of mind so much at home with the divinity, that it could venture freely to admonish him if he fell short, in any of his deeds, from the full standard of perfection raised by his worshippers. So did an ancient Scottish lady on being told, during the course of a dispute on "Sabbath recreation," that the Lord walked in the fields and ate the ears of corn, not hesitate to say: "I ken that weel, and dinna think the mair of Him for that, so I'm just tellin' ye."

Aunt Eleanor was of another leaven, for in her composition the Yorkshire blood had overpowered the Scotch. Reared in the lowest section of the English Church, she used to go occasionally into a Methodist or Baptist chapel, alleging that she had no terror of dissent, although it may have been she looked on the adventure as in the light of dissipation, just as an Arab, now and then, might eat a piece of pork, being convinced his faith was steadfast, but wishing, as it were, to taste the wickedness of sin, to make it manifest.

In the same way, her caprice satisfied, Aunt Eleanor returned again to church, but always used to treat the institution as if it were a sort of appanage belonging to the county families. She used to send and ask the clergyman to tell the organist not to pull out the vox humana stop, which she alleged made her feel ill, and never to allow his instrument to groan at her as she came into church.

On ritual she was a bar of iron, not liking what she called "highflyers," and stating roundly that for her part she would not mind if the "man" stood up to preach in his shirt-sleeves, as long as they were clean.

These were, as far as I remember, all the religious difficulties Aunt Eleanor had to contend with, for in the practice of her creed she was as upright, kind and charitable a Christian as ever I have met. Not that her faith softened a certain harshness in her mind, that made her singularly harsh to all the failings of her sex in matters sexual.

On those of men, she looked with much more leniency, holding that women always were the tempters, and that no girl had ever gone astray except by her own fault.

Once, and once only, did she almost have the chance to put her doctrine into practice, but then the issue was confused, so that it never was cleared up, whether my aunt was better than her creed, or if she held her Scoto-Yorkshire faith in its entirety. A celebrated lady horse-breaker, of perhaps easy virtue, having come into the street in which she lived, my aunt, to the blank consternation of her friends, prepared to strike up an acquaintanceship, and when remonstrated with, observed: "She may be all you say, my dear, but what a seat she has, and hands like air; she must have learned in a good school, she rides so quietly."

As fortune willed it, the acquaintanceship was never formed, but had it been, my aunt, I fancy, would have discoursed on snaffles and on curbs, and on that symbol of all equitation, the sacred lipstrap, with as much gusto as she used to do with other of her friends. Strange as it may

appear, although a semi-invalid from her birth up, a martyr as she was to violent sick headaches, which in those days were the equivalent of "nerves," she always used to ride.

She and her brother were both born horsemen, riding to hounds, and jealous to a fault. No woman, in my aunt's eyes, could ever ride, that is to say, up to her standard. Either their hands were bad, or else their seats were loose, or if both hands and seats were good, they had no nerve, or as a last resort, rode to attract attention. "You know," she used to say, "Miss Featherstone never was known to jump a fence, unless a man was looking at her. If there was but a butcher's boy she would have risked her neck, although, in that long run, the one I told you of, when we met at the Rising Sun upon Edge Hill, and finished somewhere down in Gloucestershire, she never took a fence, and then came up just as we killed, with several officers, all galloping like tailors on the road."

I hear her now, talking about her celebrated mare, "The Little Wonder," which she declared she never touched with a whip in all her life, but once, and never with the spur. This happened at a fence, at which the mare had swerved; but when she felt the whip, she put her back up and entirely refused. A Frenchman who was following my aunt, passed her, and took his hat off, saying as he passed: "Thank you for whip' your mare. I have followed you a month, but never pass you till to-day." My aunt never related this, but tears rose in her eyes: whether at her own cruelty, or at the Frenchman having passed her, I never could make out.

Horses and hunting were the chief themes of conversation with my aunt, and as she did not care the least for anyone's opinion but her own, her talk ran usually into a monologue, in which she set her theories out, as to which rein should go under which finger, and how good hands consisted in the wrist. "It is all done with a turn of the wrist, my dear, and not by butchering," a theory sound in itself and one which many would be wise to follow, if they had aunts as competent as mine to teach them the right way. Years only added to my

aunt's eccentricity, and as she lived in times when gentlewomen enjoyed ill-health, no one was much astonished when one day she definitely took to a couch, laid in the drawing-room window, from which she could survey the road and watch the people going to the meet.

For years she lay there, only getting up on Sunday to go to church, which she did, either in a bath chair, or else in Jackson's fly, for she averred that only Jackson in the whole town of Leamington could drive with decency. The other flymen started with a jerk, or sawed their horses' mouths in a way that set my aunt's nerves tingling, and used to make her open the window and expostulate in a high, quavering key. Even the trusted Jackson had to submit to adverse criticism now and then, both of his driving and of his horse's legs.

It used to be a curious sight to see the semi-invalid, leaning upon her maid, dressed in her invariable black, sprigged silk gown—she would have fainted to have heard it called a dress—a curtain bonnet on her head, a parasol ringed with small flounces and jointed in the middle, in her hand, walk down the steps of her front door and stand before the fly.

Turning towards her maid, she used to say: "Baker, lend me your arm a moment," and then advancing with the half-valetudinarian, half-sporting air that she affected, open the horse's mouth.

"Well, Jackson," she would say, "you have got a young one there. I think he would make a better hunter than some of those I see trotting down to the meet. They breed them far too long-backed nowadays, not like the well-ribbed-up, short-legged, well-coupled-up ones that I remember when I hunted as a girl with the Fitzwilliam hounds."

Jackson would touch his hat, and answer: "You know a 'orse, Miss, and this one, 'e is a 'orse, he ought by rights to be a gentleman's."

Then with an admonition as to not starting with a jerk, my aunt would get into the fly, Baker having first put in a

coonskin cushion with the head on, made in the fashion of a pillow-case.

When my aunt had put her feet into it, arranged her shawl and her belongings carefully about her, just as if she were going on a journey in the wilds, the fly rolled off upon its way, with my aunt looking out now and then to criticise the driver and the horse. After having lain upon her couch ten years or so, one day she suddenly got up. The ensuing week she went out hunting, dressed in her long Victorian habit, tall hat and veil, and with a boa round her neck. She hunted on, riding much harder than most members of the hunt, but in a modest and retiring way, and followed by her groom. He, a staid lad, who had been brought up with Lord Fitzwilliam as an under-strapper in the hunt stables, always used to say: "Them as rides with my lady 'as to know 'ow to ride; but then I passed my youth with Lord Fitzwilliam. They was a serious family, all rode to 'ounds, and all of 'em rode blood 'orses, from the old lord down to the little gals."

My aunt continued riding to extreme old age, and then went to the meets driven in a fly, of course, by someone she could put her trust in, though Jackson long had passed away, to drive perhaps in some particular limbo, where the shades of Captain Barclay, old Squire Osbaldiston, and Sir Tatton Sykes drove shadowy chariots, dressed in their "down the road" coats, with a coach and horses on the big pearl buttons, just as they had appeared in life, all with straws in the corners of their mouths, and with that air of supernatural knowledge of the horse which they all had on earth.

My aunt, I fancy, could she have chosen for herself, would have gone to some heaven, half stable and half country house, with just a sprinkling of Low Church divines flying about in black Geneva gowns and white lawn bands, to give an air of having been redeemed, to the select, but rather scanty, inmates of the place when they sat down to dine.

Poor lady, all her life was one long tutelage, till her last sister died. Then when she had peeped below the blinds to satisfy herself that the hearse horses all were sound, and none wore housings, a thing that she detested, saying she could not bear to see a horse in petticoats, she found herself quite free.

After the fashion of the times, she did not go herself to see her sister buried, but sat at home and read the Burial Service, although a member of the family averred on his return he caught her dozing with the Church Service closed upon her lap, and *Market Harboro'* in her hand. Years passed, and she became a kindly tyrant in her old age, making her young relations happy and terrified by her ungracious kindness to them all.

Lastly, in a bath chair, she used to have herself dragged up and down the Holly Walk or the Parade, criticising horses and riders most relentlessly, and now and then making the chairman stop before the shops where pictures were for sale, and after looking at them most intently, usually saying, "'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view," a piece of criticism which she thought final, as applied to art in all its branches, even to photographs.

She died as she had lived, after arranging her own funeral with the undertaker, and enjoining on him to be sure that the hearse was not started with a jerk, and all his beasts were sound.

He left her presence snorting a little in a bandanna pocket-handkerchief, remarking: "Well, I never saw such a lady in my life, a plucked one to be sure, I'll bet a suvering."

My aunt rests quietly under some elm trees in Old Milverton churchyard.

Many old Scottish ladies lie round about the grave where my aunt sleeps under a granite slab now stained a little with the weather, imparting to the churchyard a familiar air, as of the tea-parties that she once used to give, when they all sat together, just as they now lie closely in the ground, to keep

each other warm. The rooks caw overhead, and when the hounds pass on a bright November morning, I hope she hears them, for heaven would be to her but a dull dwelling-place if it contained no horses and no hounds.

NIGGERS

JAHVE created all things, especially the world in which we live, and which is really the centre of the universe, in the same way as England is the centre of the planet, and as the Stock Exchange is the real centre of all England, despite the dreams of the astronomers and the economists. He set the heavens in their place, bridled the sea, disposed the tides, the phases of the moon, made summer, winter, and the seasons in their due rotation, showed us the constant resurrection of the day after the death of night, sent showers, hail, frost, snow, thunder and lightning, and the other outward manifestations of his power to serve, to scourge, or to affright us, according to his will.

Under the surface of our world he set the minerals, metals, the coal, and quicksilver, with platinum, gold, and copper, and let his diamonds and rubies, with sapphires, emeralds, and the rest, as topazes, jacinths, peridots, sardonyx, tourmalines, or chrysoberyls, take shape and colour, and slowly carbonize during the ages.

Upon the upper crust of the great planet he caused the plants to grow, the trees, bushes of every kind, from the hard, cruciform-leaved carmamoel, to the pink-flowering Siberian willow. Palm trees and oaks, ash, plane, and sycamore, with churchyard yew, and rowan, holly, jacaranda, greenheart and pines, larch, willow, and all kinds of trees that flourish, rot, and die unknown in tropic forests, unplagued by botanists, with their pestilent Pinus Smithii or Cupressus Higginbottomiana, rustled their leaves, swayed up and down their branches, and were content, fearing no axe. Canebrakes and mangrove swamps; the immeasurable extension of the Steppes, Pampas, and Prairies, and the frozen Tundras of the north; stretches of ling and heather,

with bees buzzing from flower to flower, larks soaring into heaven above them; acres of red verbena in the Pampa; lilies and irises in Africa, and the green-bluish sage brush desert of the middle prairies of America; cactus and tacuarás, with istle and maguey, flax, hemp, esparto, and the infinite variety of the compositae, all praised his name.

Again, in the Sahara, in the Kalahari desert, in the Libyan sands, and Iceland, he denied almost all vegetation, and yet his work seemed good to those his creatures—Arabs, Bosjesmans, reindeer, and Arctic foxes, with camels, ostriches, and eider ducks, who peopled his waste spaces. He breathed his breath into the nostrils of the animals, giving them understanding, feeling, power of love and hatred, speech after their fashion, love of offspring (if logic and anatomy hold good), souls and intelligence, whether he made their bodies biped or quadruped, after his phantasy. Giraffes and tigers, with jerboas, grey soft chinchillas, elephants, armadillos and sloths, ant-eaters, marmots, antelopes, and the fast-disappearing bison of America, gnus, springboks and hartbeest, ocelot and kangaroo, bears (grizzly and cinnamon), tapirs and wapiti, he made for man to shoot, to torture, to abuse, to profit by, and to demonstrate by his conduct how inferior in his conception of how to use his life he is to them.

All this he did and rested, being glad that he had done so much, and called a world into existence that seemed likely to be good. But even he, having begun to work, was seized with a sort of "cacoethes operandi," and casting about to make more perfect what, in fact, needed no finishing touch, he took his dust and, breathing on it, called up man. This done he needed rest again, and having set the sun and moon just in the right position to give light by day and night to England, he recollected that a week had passed. That is to say, he thought of time, and thinking, made and measured it, not knowing, or perhaps not caring, that it was greater than himself; for, had he chanced to think about the matter, perchance, he had never chosen to create it, and then our

lives had been immeasurable, and our capcaity for suffering even more infinite than at present, that is, if "infinite" admits comparison. However, time being once created and man imagined (but not yet perfected), and, therefore, life the heavy burden being imposed on him, the Lord, out of His great compassion, gave us death, the compensating boon which makes life tolerable.

But to return to man. How, when, why, wherefore, whether in derision of himself, through misconception, inadvertence, or sheer malignity, he created man, is still unknown. With the true instinct of a tyrant (or creator, for both are one), he gave us reason to a certain power, disclosed his acts up to a certain point, but left the motives wrapped in mystery. Philosophers and theologians, theosophists, positivists, clairvoyants, necromancers, cabalists, with Rosicrucians and alchemists, and all the rabble rout of wise and reverend reasoners from Thales of Miletus down to Nietzsche, have reasoned, raved, equivocated, and contradicted one another, framed their cosmogonies, arcana, written their gospels and Korans, printed their Tarot packs, been martyred, martyred others (fire the greatest syllogist on earth), and we no wiser.

Still man exists, black, white, red, yellow, and the Pintos of the State of Vera Cruz. A rare invention, wise conception, and the quintessence of creative power rendered complete by practice, for we must see that even an all-wise, all-powerful God (like ours) matures as time goes on.

An animal erect upon its feet, its eyes well placed its teeth constructed to masticate all kinds of food, its brain seemingly capable of some development, its hearing quick, endowed with soul, and with its gastric juices so contained as to digest fish, flesh, grain, fruit and stand the inroads of all schools of cookery, was a creative masterpiece. So all was ready and the playground delivered over beautiful to man, for men to make it hideous and miserable.

Alps, Himalayas, Andes, La Plata and Vistula, Amazon,

with Mississippi, Yang-tsekiang and Ganges, Volga, Rhine, Elbe and Don; Hecla and Stromboli, Pichincha and Cotopaxi, with the Istacihuatl and Lantern of Maracaibo; seas, White and Yellow, with oceans, Pacific and Atlantic; great inland lakes as Titicaca, Ladoga, all the creeks, inlets, gulfs and bays, the plains, the deserts, geysers, hot springs on the Yellowstone, Pitch Lake of Trinidad, and, to be brief, the myriad wonders of the world, were all awaiting newly created man, waiting his coming forth from out the bridal chamber between the Tigris and Euphrates, like a mad bridegroom to run his frenzied course. Then came the (apparent) lapsus in the Creator's scheme. That the first man in the fair garden by the Euphrates was white, I think, we take for granted. True that we have no information on the subject, but in this matter of creation we have entered, so to speak, into a tacit compact with the creator and it behoves us to concur with him and help him when a difficulty looms.

Briefly I leave the time when man contented with the mastodon, hunted the mammoth, or was hunted in his turn by plesiosaurus or by pterodactyl. Scanty indeed are the records which survive of the Stone Age, the Bronze, or of the dwellers in the wattled wigwams on the lakes. Suffice it that the strong preyed on the weak, as they still do to-day in happy England, and that early dwellers upon earth seem to have thought as much as we do how to invent appliances with which to kill their foes.

The Hebrew Scriptures, and the record of crimes of violence and bad faith committed by the Jews on other races need not detain us, as they resemble so entirely our own exploits among the "niggers" of to-day. I take it that Jahwe was little taken up with any of his creatures, except the people who inhabited the countries from which the Aryans came. Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Persians, and the rest were no doubt useful and built pyramids, invented hanging gardens, erected towers, observed the stars, spoke the truth (if their historians lie not), drew a good bow, and

rode like centaurs or like Gauchos. What did it matter when all is said and done? They were all "niggers," and whilst they fought and conquered, or were conquered, bit by bit the race which God had thought of from the first, slowly took shape.

A doubt creeps in. Was the creator omniscient in this case, or did our race compel him, force his hand, containing in itself those elements of empire which he may have overlooked? 'Twere hard to say, but sometimes philosophers have whispered that the Great Power, working, as he did, without the healthy stimulus of competition, was careless. I leave this speculation as more fit for thimbleriggers, for casuists, for statisticians, metaphysicians, or the idealistic merchant, than for serious men.

Somehow or other the Aryans spread through Europe, multiplied, prospered, and possessed the land. Europe was theirs, for Finns and Basques are not worth counting, being, as it were, a sort of European "niggers," destined to disappear. Little by little out of the mist of barbarism Greece emerged. Homer and Socrates, with Xenophon, Euripides, Pindar and Heraclitus, Bion, Anaximander, Praxiteles, with Plato, Pericles, and all the rest of the poets and thinkers, statesmen and philosophers, who in that little state carried the triumphs of the human intellect, at least as far as any who came after them, flourished, and died. Material and bourgeois Rome, wolf-suckled on its seven hills, waxed and became the greatest power, conquering the world by phrases as its paltry "Civis Romanus," and by its "Pax Romana," and with the spade, and by the sheer dead weight of commonplace, filling the office in the old world that now is occupied so worthily by God's own Englishmen. Then came the waning of the Imperial City, its decay illumined but by the genius of Apuleius and Petronius Arbiter. Whether the new religion which the pipe-clayed soldier Constantine adopted out of policy, first gave the blow, or whether, as said Pliny, that the Latifundia were the ruin of all Italy, or if the effemi-

nacy which luxury brings with it made the Roman youths resemble the undersized, hermaphroditic beings who swarm in Paris and in London, no one knows.

Popes and Republics, Lombards, Franks and Burgundians, with Visigoths and Huns, and the phantasmagoria of hardly-to-be-comprehended beings who struggled in the darker ages like microbes in a piece of flesh, or like the Christian paupers in an English manufacturing town, all paved the way for the development of the race, perhaps, intended, from the beginning, to rule mankind. From when King Alfred toasted his cakes and made his candles marked in rings* (like those weird bottles full of sand from Alum Bay) to measure time, down to the period when our present Sovereign wrote her *Diary in the Highlands*, is but a moment in the history of mankind. Still, in the interval, our race has had full leisure to mature. Saxon stolidity and Celtic guile, Teutonic dullness, Norman pride, all tempered with east wind, baptized with mist, narrowed by insularity, swollen with good fortune, and rendered overbearing with much wealth, have worked together to produce the type. A bold, beef-eating, generous, narrow-minded type, kindly but arrogant; the men fine specimens of well-fed animals, red in the blood and face; the women cleanly, "upstanding" creatures, most divinely tall; both sexes slow of comprehension, but yet not wanting sense; great feeders, lovers of strong drinks, and given to brutal sports, as were their prototypes, the men of ancient Rome; dogged as bull-dogs, quick to compassion for the sufferers from the injustice of their neighbours; thinking that they themselves can do no wrong, athletic though luxurious; impatient of all hardships, yet enduring them when business shows a profit or when honour calls; moralists, if such exist, and still, like cats, not quite averse to fish when the turn serves; clear-headed in affairs, but idealists and, in the main, wrong-headed in their views of life; priding themselves most chiefly on their faults, and resolute to carry all those virtues

*Staple industry of the Isle of Wight.

which they lack at home, to other lands.

Thus, through the mist of time, the Celto-Saxon race emerged from heathendom and woad, and, in the fullness of the Creator's pleasure, became the tweed-clad Englishman. Much of the earth was his, and in the skies he had his mansion ready, well aired, with every appliance known to modern sanitary science waiting for him, and a large Bible on the chest of drawers in every room. Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India and countless islands, useful as coaling stations and depots where to stack his Bibles for diffusion amongst the heathen, all owned his sway. Races, as different from his own as is a rabbit from an elephant, were ruled by tweed-clad satraps expedited from the public schools, the universities, or were administered by the dried fruits culled from the Imperial Bar. But whilst God's favoured nation thus had run its course, the French, the Germans, Austrians, Spaniards, Dutch, Greeks, Italians and all the futile remnant of mankind outside "our flag" had struggled to equal it. True that in most particulars they were inferior. Their beer was weak, their shoddy not so artfully diffused right through their cloth, their cottons less well "sized," the constitution of their realm less nebulous, or the Orders of their Churches better authenticated, than were our own. No individual of their various nationalities by a whole life of grace was ever half so moral as the worst of us is born.

And so I leave them weltering in their attempts to copy us, and turn to those of whom I had intended first to write, but whom the virtues, power, might and dominion of our race have caused me to forget.

I wished to show how Jahve Sabaoth made the earth, planted his men, his beasts, his trees upon it, and then as if half doubtful of himself left it to simmer slowly till his Englishmen stood forth. I felt he was our God, jealous and blood-thirsty, as in his writings he has let us see; our God, and we His people, faithful to bloodshed, not that we liked it, but because we knew we did His will. We are His people

and it was natural that He should give mankind into our hand. But yet it seemed that we had grown so godlike in ourselves that perhaps Jahve was waiting for us to indicate the way. He made the world and stocked it, planting apparently without design the basest peoples in the most favoured lands; then we stood forth to help him, and by degrees carried out all He thought of from the first.

In Africa, Australia, and in America, in all the myriad islands of the southern seas inferior races dwell. They have their names, their paltry racial differences, some are jet-black, some copper-coloured, flat-nosed, high-featured, tall, short, hideous or handsome—what is that to us? We lump them all as niggers, being convinced that their chief quality is their difference from ourselves.

Hindus, as Brahmins, Bengalis, and the dwellers in Bombay; the Cingalese, Sikhs and Pathans, Rajpoote, Parsis, Afghans, Kashmiris, Beluchis, Burmese, with all the peoples from the Caspian Sea to Timur Laut, are thus described. Arabs are "niggers."

So are Malays, the Malagasy, Japanese, Chinese, Red Indians, as Sioux, Comanches, Navajos, Apaches with Zapatecas, the Esquimaux, and in the south Ranqueles, Lenguas, Pampas, Pehuelches, Tobas, and Araucanos, all these are "niggers" though their hair is straight. Turks, Persians, Levantines, Egyptians, Moors, and generally all those of almost any race whose skins are darker than our own, and whose ideas of faith, of matrimony, banking, and therapeutics differ from those held by the dwellers of the meridian of Primrose Hill, cannot escape. Men of the Latin races, though not born free, can purchase freedom with a price, that is, if they conform to our ideas, are rich and wash, ride bicycles, and gamble on the Stock Exchange. If they are poor, then woe betide them, let them paint their faces white with all the ceruse which ever Venice furnished, to the black favour shall they come. A plague on pigments, blackness is

in the heart, not in the face, and poverty, no matter how it washes, still is black.

Niggers are niggers, whether black or white, but the archetype is found in Africa.

O Africa, land created out of sheer spleen, as if to show that even Jahve himself suffered at times from long continued work; in spleen, or else contrived out of his bounty to encourage us and serve as sweetener to his most favoured nation in its self-appointed task! A country rich in itself, in animals, in vegetation, and in those minerals in which we chiefly see the evidence of the Creator's power. Rich, and yet given up to such a kind of men that they are hardly to be held as men at all. Scripture itself has asked half doubtingly if they can change their skins, but we who know the Scriptures as we know Bradshaw, making them books of reference in which to search for precepts to support our acts, are ready to reply.

The Ethiopian cannot change his skin, and therefore we are ready to possess his land and to uproot him for the general welfare of mankind, smiting him hip and thigh, as the Jews did the Canaanites when first they opened up the promised land. Niggers who have no cannons have no rights. Their land is ours, their cattle and their fields, their houses ours; their arms, their poor utensils, and everything they have; their women, too, are ours to use as concubines, to beat, exchange, to barter off for gunpowder or gin, ours to infect with syphilis, leave with child, outrage, torment, and make, by contact with the vilest of our vile, more vile than beasts.

Yet take us kindly, and at once the tender nature of our hearts is manifest to all. Cretans, Armenians, Cubans, Macedonians, we commiserate, subscribe, and feel for; our feeling souls are wrung when Outlanders cannot get votes. Bishops and cardinals and statesmen, with philanthropists and pious ladies, all go wild about the Turks.

England's great heart is sound, it beats for all the sorrows of mankind; we must press on, we owe it to ourselves and

to our God; ours to perform our duty, his to provide the field; the world is ours, let us press on to do our mutual will, and lose no time, in case inferior aping nations may forestall us, cut in between us and all those we burn to serve, and having done so, then shoot out their tongues and say: "These were but weaklings, and their God made in their image, merely an Anglo-Saxon and anthropomorphous fool."

SUCCESS

SUCCESS, which touches nothing that it does not vulgarize, should be its own reward. In fact, rewards of any kind are but vulgarities.

We applaud successful folk, and straight forget them, as we do ballet-dancers, actors, and orators. They strut their little hour, and then are relegated to peerages, to baronetcies, to books of landed gentry, and the like.

Quick triumphs make short public memories. Triumph itself only endures the time the triumphal car sways through the street. Your nine days' wonder is a sort of five-legged calf, or a two-headed nightingale, and of the nature of a calculating boy—a seven months' prodigy, born out of time to his own undoing and a mere wonderment for gaping dullards who dislocate their jaws in ecstasy of admiration and then start out to seek new idols to adore. We feel that after all the successful man is fortune's wanton, and that good luck and he have but been equal to two common men. Poverty, many can endure with dignity. Success, how few can carry off, even with decency and without baring their innermost infirmities before the public gaze.

Caricatures in bronze and marble, and titles made ridiculous by their exotic style we shower upon all those who have succeeded, in war, in literature, or art; we give them money, and for a season no African Lucullus in Park Lane can dine without them. Then having given, feel that we have paid for service rendered, and generally withhold respect.

For those who fail, for those who have sunk still battling beneath the muddy waves of life, we keep our love, and that curiosity about their lives which makes their memories green when the cheap gold is dusted over, which once we gave success.

How few successful men are interesting! Hannibal, Alcibiades, with Raleigh, Mithridates, and Napoleon, who would compare them for a moment with their mere conquerors?

The unlucky Stuarts, from the first poet king slain at the ball play, to the poor mildewed Cardinal of York, with all their faults, they leave the stolid Georges million of miles behind, sunk in their pudding and prosperity. The prosperous Elizabeth, after a life of honours unwillingly surrendering her cosmetics up to death in a state bed, and Mary laying her head upon the block at Fotheringay after the nine and forty years of failure of her life (failure except of love), how many million miles, unfathomable seas, and sierras upon sierras separate them?

And so of nations, causes and events. Nations there are as interesting in decadence, as others in their ten-percentish apogee are dull and commonplace. Causes, lost almost from the beginning of the world, but hardly yet despaired of, as the long struggle betwixt rich and poor, which dullards think eternal, but which will one day be resolved, either by the absorption of the rich into the legions of the poor, or vice versa, still remain interesting, and will do so whilst the unequal combat yet endures.

Causes gone out of vogue, which have become almost as ludicrous as is a hat from Paris of ten years ago; causes which hang in monumental mockery quite out of fashion, as that of Poland, still are more interesting than is the struggle between the English and the Germans, which shall sell gin and gunpowder to negroes on the Coast.

Even events long passed, and which right-thinking men have years ago dismissed to gather dust in the waste spaces of their minds, may interest or repel according as they may make for failure or success.

Failure alone can interest speculative minds. Success is for the millions of the working world, who see the engine in eight hours arrive in Edinburgh from London, and marvel

at the last improvement in its wheels. The real interest in the matters being the forgotten efforts of some alchemist who, with the majesty of law ever awake to burn him as a witch, with the hoarse laughter of the practical and business men still ringing in his ears, made his rude model of a steam engine, and perhaps lost his eyesight when it burst.

On a deserted beach in Cuba, not far from El Caney, some travellers not long ago came on a skeleton. Seated in a rough chair, it sat and gazed upon the sea. The gulls had roosted on the collar bones, and round the feet sea-wreck and dulse had formed a sort of wreath. A tattered Spanish uniform still fluttered from the bones, and a cigar-box set beside the chair held papers showing that the man had been an officer of rank. One of these gave the password of the day when he had lost his life, and as the travellers gazed upon the bones, a land crab peeped out of a hole just underneath the chair.

All up and down the coast were strewn the remnants of the pomp and circumstance of glorious war. Rifles with rusty barrels, the stocks set thick with barnacles, steel scabbards with bent swords wasted to scrap iron, fragments of uniforms and belts, ends of brass chains and bones of horses reft from their wind-swept prairies to undergo the agonies of transport in a ship, packed close as sardines in a box, and then left to die wounded with the vultures picking out their eyes. All, all, was there, fairly spread out as in a kindergarten, to point the lesson to the fools who write of war, if they had wit to see. Gun carriages half silted up with sand, and rusted broken Maxims, gave an air of ruin, as is the case wherever Titan man has been at play, broken his toys, and then set out to kill his brother fools.

Withal nothing of dignity about the scene; a stage unskilfully set out with properties all made up of the cheap; even the ribs and trucks of the decaying ships of what once had been Admiral Cervera's fleet stood roasting in the sun, their port-holes just awash, as they once roasted in the

flames which burned them and their crews. Nothing but desolation in the scene, and yet a desolation of a paltry kind, not caused by time, by famine, pestilence, or anything which could impart an air of tragedy, only the desolation made by those who had respectively sent their poor helots out to fight, staying themselves smug and secure at home, well within reach of the quotations of the Stock Exchange.

So in his mouldering chair the general sat, his password antiquated and become as much the property of the first passer-by as an advertisement of "liver pills." His uniform, no doubt his pride, all rags; his sword (bought at some outfitter's) long stolen away and sold for drink by him who filched it; but yet the sun-dried bones, which once had been a man, were of themselves more interesting than were his living conquerors with their cheap air of insincere success.

The world goes out to greet the conqueror with flowers and with shouts, but first he has to conquer, and so draw down upon himself the acclamations of the crowd, who do not know that hundreds such as the man they stultify with noise have gloriously failed, and that the odium of success is hard enough to bear, without the added ignominy of popular applause. Who with a spark of humour in his soul can bear success without some irritation in his mind? But for good luck he might have been one of the shouters who run sweating by his car; doubts must assail him, if success has not already made him pachydermatous to praise, that sublimate which wears away the angles of our self-respect, and leaves us smooth to catch the mud our fellows fling at us, in their fond adoration of accomplished facts. Success is but the recognition (chiefly by yourself) that you are better than your fellows are. A paltry feeling, nearly allied to the base scheme of punishments and of rewards which has made most faiths arid, and rendered actions noble in themselves mere huckstering affairs of fire insurance.

If a man put his life in peril for the Victoria Cross, or pass laborious days in laboratories tormenting dogs, only to be a

baronet at last, a plague of courage and laborious days. Arts, sciences, and literature, with all the other trifles in which hard-working idle men make occupations for themselves, when they lead to material success, spoil their professor, and degrade themselves to piecework at so many pounds an hour.

Nothing can stand against success and yet keep fresh. Nations as well as individuals feel its vulgarizing power. Throughout all Europe, Spain alone still rears its head, the unspoiled race, content in philosophic guise to fail in all she does, and thus preserve the individual independence of her sons. Successful nations have to be content with their success, their citizens cannot be interesting. So many hundred feet of sanitary tubes a minute or an hour, so many wage-saving applications of machinery, so many men grow rich; fancy a poet rich through rhyming, or a philosopher choked in banknotes, whilst writing his last scheme of wise philosophy. Yet those who fail, no matter how ingloriously, have their revenge on the successful few, by having kept themselves free from vulgarity, or by having died unknown.

A miner choked with firedamp in a pit, dead in the vain attempt to save some beer-mused comrade left behind entombed, cannot be vulgar, even if when alive he was a thief. Your crass successful man who has his statue set up in out streets (apparently to scare away the crows), and when he dies his column and a half in penny cyclopædias, turns interest to ashes by his apotheosis in the vulgar eye.

But the forgotten general sitting in his chair, his fleshless feet just lapping in the waves, his whitening bones fast mouldering into dust, nothing can vulgarize him; no fool will crown him with a tin-foiled laurel wreath, no poetaster sing his praise in maudlin ode or halting threnody, for he has passed into the realm of those who by misfortune claim the sympathy of writers who are dumb.

Let him sit on and rest, looking out on the sea, where his last vision saw the loss of his doomed country's fleet.

An archetype of those who fail, let him still sit watching the gulls fly screaming through the air, and mark the fish spring and fall back again with a loud crash, in the still waters of the tropic beach.

A MEMORY OF PARNELL

HE always seemed to me a creature from another world, or a survival of some older type of man. Not that in ordinary respects he differed from the usual race of all mankind, having their passions, weaknesses, and all the rest developed to the full, together with an incapacity to get his stirrup-leathers the same length, on horseback, when he rode. His strangeness was, as is the strangeness of a faun or hamadryad, beings we all know did exist and have their being, so strongly has their personality been drawn for us and petrified in stone.

Occasionally we feel that characters in poems and in pictures are far more real than the sham human beings who go about in millions, pretending to be men.

The subject of my recollection, and how sad it is to rack the half-sealed chambers of the mind for the impressions of dead friends left on it, as the sun leaves pictures, so some think, indelible on every stone, was one of those whose death strikes us as an injustice and in some way a mistake.

Crossing St. James's Street I well remember seeing on a bill, "Death of the Irish Leader," and thinking that it was some error of the press.

Your politician dies, and it appears quite natural. Last week he had his knighthood; a month ago became the last of all the peers, received the garter at the last royal birthday, and now resumes the sleep which was but three parts broken during the whole course of his life. One pauses, recollects his small peculiarities, his tricks of speech and manner, and then forgets him, half-pitying, half with contempt, thinking an ill-graced actor has passed through the wings, into the freedom of the street, and left behind him nothing but the remembrance of his faults, when once the electroplated

glamour of the daily press has been rubbed off, leaving the tin all bare.

But when a man, such as was Parnell, passes, all the infirmities of life fall off, and only his originality and greatness stay. Then it becomes a marvel that the multitude of rats has been the undoing of the lion. One tries to cipher out in what his influence lay, then gives it up, and is content to say: "I knew him, may he rest well at last."

In the dull, drab and common world of English life where everything is done upon the lowest level that the intellect of man can compass, in which our Gladdies and our Dizzies, with Pam and Bright and Buckshot Forster and the rest, appear like vestrymen unglorified, a figure such as his seemed almost insolent.

It is too soon perhaps to try to mark his place in history, but since Old Noll (hero in England, and in Ireland devil), perhaps no stronger character has played its part upon the boards of the great theatre at Westminster. He had not eloquence as it is generally appraised, although at times the intensity of hate he bore us and our twaddling institutions, gave him a glacial fire, which scorched even the dull wet-blankets of the House, where all is commonplace.

He was not deeply read, not even in the history of the land for which he fought. He was not humorous, nor had he wit, but now and then inflections came into his voice, which stirred one more than all the spurred-up caperings of orators, as when he finished up a phrase with "This is going on to-day in Ireland," in which he put such force and venom that the word Ireland seemed to die upon his lips in froth.

I cannot think of him as popular even at home upon his own estate, nor yet at school, still less with his own followers, especially with those of them who sold their Lord, and quite omitted to make sure the thirty pieces should be paid; and when they lost them did not have the grace to hang themselves.

Not popular, in the hail-fellow-well-met and loudly cheered conception of the word, but yet with an attraction

for all women whom he came across, who were drawn to him by his careless treatment of them, and by the wish that nature has implanted in their sex, to be the rulers of all men who stand above their kind.

Straying about the House of Commons after the fashion of a new boy at a school, I chanced to sit down quite unthinkingly upon a bench. An Irish legislator edged up and whispered: "You're sitting in his seat."

To this I answered something about the seats being free unless they had a name attached to them, and I fear bade my interlocutor fare to Gehenna by the shortest route. A gentle voice behind me almost whispered in my ear: "Quite right, the seats are free."

This laid the first stone to the building of a desultory friendship which lasted till his death.

Occasionally we dined together, not talking very much, as we had nothing very much in common, except a love of horses.

Of them Parnell knew little, and the little that I knew was almost absolutely from the colonial point of view, so that our theories did not conflict, as often happens between friends. On politics we never talked, as upon almost every point we disagreed, he leading a great party, I being a mere unit of an amorphous crowd of Nonconformists, Temperance Reformers, Deceased Wife's Sisters Monomaniacs, and Single Taxers, with all the faddists and the dried fruit of outworn Liberal politics which at that time the tide of Liberalism had left like jelly-fish and seaweed, stranded and dying on the beach.

And what a beach it was, strewn with the dead remains of Leagues and Federations and Societies, mostly composed of Treasurer and Secretary, long-haired and stammering speakers, all with their theories of prompt regeneration for the body politic, and a collecting box to shove beneath the public's nose.

We raved, we ranted, and we called on Englishmen to

rise, to embrace the movement and ourselves, and comprehend that social and political emancipation was at hand and that we were the men.

Amongst this herd of addle-brained and sometimes generous, sometimes self-interested reformers (but in all instances belated), which the late lowering of the franchise had let loose upon the world, and most of whom had not sufficient wit to run a coffee-stall, the figure of Parnell stood out, like the Old Man of Hoy stands out against the sea. The little waves of the above referred to muddletonians, who with their iteration damnable and advocacy of reforms long dead, surged round him, almost unnoticed and unnoticeable.

The larger scum of Liberal and Conservative, each again occupied with questions which had long been superannuated, left him unmoved.

The party leaders feared and hated him, for he despised them, and his outlook upon politics seemed but to point out all their lack of strength and incapacity.

Gladstone, who though in talk for fifty years, never contrived to say a single thing either original or worth remembering, was overbalanced by him, and Salisbury looked on him as Turk looks at a native Christian who rebels, whilst Morley, from the dreary, arid heights of Mount Philosophus, admired and wondered but supported loyally, although perhaps feeling a little hurt at having to play the second violin to one who knew no Greek. Balfour, by virtue of his æstheticism, was repelled, and did not hesitate to shoot out mildly philosophic lips. Churchill admired, and perhaps intrigued with him whom without doubt he thought a rebel, but in politics and love all that succeeds is fair. Chamberlain very likely dreamed of some municipal Home Rule, with Parnell as a county councillor glorified, a parliament for gas and sewage, existing by his will in Dublin, and all the Irish nationalists, apparelled in frieze coats and battered hats stuck with dudheens, shillelaghs in their hands, dancing round and singing "Long live Birmingham!"

No one else counted, and in this motley crew of dreamers and of dullards, with here and there an able man upon the make, to give consistency, the Irish Leader jostled for a place.

Whatever were his faults, and I suppose that being human, he had many of them, one thing is clear to me, that above all he hated England and her ways. With what a seething coldness, as of ice upon the edges of a crater, he would say "your country" or "your Queen." Even the House of Commons, stupid as it was, would shiver, and red-faced Tory Squires, and Nonconformists reared on seed-cake and lemonade, rise in their seats, shaking their mottled or their plebeian fists at his calm smiling face.

It did us good to hear him stammer through a speech, misquoting all his notes, halting and trying back, and pouring all the vitriol of his contempt upon us as we sat.

It seemed as if some sort of incoherent Daniel had come to judgment and was about to pass his sentence on us all.

The British Parliament for generations had listened to the tirades of all kinds of Irishmen, but they had all been of another sort and different magnitude.

In them, the Saxon was a tyrant and a brute, a sort of Juggernaut, feared and yet envied, who had laid waste the land. But now he figured as an ass, and as ridiculous, whilst all the Irishry, taking their cue from their chief's speeches, publicly thanked their gods that they were Irish, and professed to think that the word English, applied with reference to themselves, was more than infidel, and quite as bad as Protestant, or thief. Thus did the Chief make it impossible for British ministers to take up the "poor Patrick" attitude, which in the past had always been a trump.

No one, I think, was ever hated by the House as was Parnell, and he returned its hate a hundredfold, taking delight in gibing at it, and making it absurd.

Nothing offended him so much as when some hypocritical "Noncon," whom he and Gladstone had kicked round into

Home Rule, would talk about the "union of our hearts," and prophesy that soon all difference of race would be obliterated. Then as he ground his teeth, and his pale cheek grew white with rage, he sometimes muttered "Damn them," with so much unction and such fervency, that one felt sure his prayer, if not immediately vouchsafed, would yet be taken *ad avizandum* as the lawyers say, and perhaps be of avail. But whether it was answered, or fell harmless on the unwholesome air of parliament, it had the effect somehow of setting one a-thinking of how great a fraud the British Empire was, and rousing one out of the feeling of sublime contentment with ourselves, with which we of the Celto-Saxon race are prone to look at all things here below, knowing that we enjoy a place apart and specially reserved for us in mansions in the skies with all repairs performed for us, by the Creator of the World.

When we debated with much circumstance, and with citation of innumerable unnecessary figures (the ever-present refuge of a dullard in a speech), some weighty matter of a railroad in the Midland Counties, it was a sight to see the Irish Leader lounge into the House, stroking his beard and pulling his moustache with long white fingers, on which dull sparkled his historic sapphire ring. He would remark half confidentially to his lieutenant, "Biggar, I think that this debate ought not to finish before twelve o'clock." To which his Sancho Panza would reply, "It's quite impossible; I've let the boys away." Then, absently, as if he had never seen the man, or at that instant suddenly became aware that he persisted still in living, Parnell would say, "Tell Gallagher to speak." "Gallagher, sir, the only thing he knows is butter." "Well, let him speak on butter."

And in an instant Gallagher would rise, quite unprepared, and speaking, maybe, for the first time in that august assembly which, as a general rule, strikes us of the predominant partnership stark dumb and curdles all our brains.

With figures and with facts, which all looked feasible, the

string-pulled member-marionette would thunder forth on the injustice done to Irish industries in general, and that to Irish butter in particular, by the abominable Bill before the House. After an hour, with perspiration running down his face, he would begin to talk upon the Irish question as a whole, be pulled up by the Speaker, engage in wrangles with the Tories, and speak and speak, with illustrations of his theme, with so much vigour and such aptness, that you began to think a hideous wrong was going to be done. Just about midnight Parnell might saunter in and either say "I think I will not speak," or "Biggar, tell that fool to stop; I wish to say a word." Then word would somehow be conveyed to the rapt orator, who would subside, perhaps in the very middle of a phrase, and Parnell, rising, would proceed apparently quite coldly, but with shut fists, and a light foam about the corners of his mouth, to distil vitriol, drop by drop, into the very souls of Englishmen, till Gladstone, putting on his hat, would leave the house, and comfortable Liberals, who had been cultivating a Cork or Limerick brogue, by means of which to show goodwill to Ireland, would shiver in their broadcloth coats, and curse the day that made him their ally.

No one, I think, since Oliver the Great and Good (I write for the mere Englishry), has made the House of Commons tremble to its cowardly depths, as did Parnell, and never Irishman before or since his time, if we except Hugh Roe O'Neill, has ever treated, upon equal terms, with the old English foe.

Undoubtedly, he both despised and hated Gladstone, who on his part showed plainly that he was in the presence of a stronger man, and though after his death he damned him with faint praise, could not have been much disappointed when, after his nine days' waiting, the Nonconformist cat jumped as it did, and shut Home Rule off for a hundred years.

Not that I think that Gladstone did not believe in Ireland's

wrongs, but that he did not wish to see an Irish parliament led by a man far stronger than himself.

During the days of *Sturm und Drang* when he was fighting for his soul, I saw him now and then as one sees figures in a dream.

Once seated in an old-fashioned eating-house off the Strand, he wandered in, and seeing me, sat down and talked during the dinner which he could not eat. We spoke of horses, of which, as I have said, he knew but little, and I not overmuch, and then sauntered down to the House, to find it counted out.

Then came his death and funeral, with as it seemed no one ashamed in Ireland, and almost everybody secretly pleased in London, as if they felt an enemy of England was gone, as in fact was the case, for he who lets a Briton see he does not reverence him and his country, commits the crime against the British Holy Ghost, a spirit plethoric and heavy, generous but overbearing, and as well stuffed with pride as is an airship or a fire-balloon with gas.

Let him sleep well, a Protestant amongst the serried graves of those who lie looking towards Rome, whilst they await the Trumpet's call. A Saxon leader of a Celtic race, a man who, though no orator, yet held enthralled a parliament that lives on talk. Well may his spirit hover hesitatingly between the towers of Westminster, where he enforced respect, and the grey columns upon College Green, the unfaithful Mecca, which he never lived to reach.

HARBOURED

JOSEPH CONRAD

A LIGHT warm rain fell upon the old-world streets. The houses, with their casement windows, timbered upper storeys and overhanging eaves, still kept the air as of an older world. The gateways, with their battlements and low archways through which the medieval traffic once had flowed, with men-at-arms and archers, strings of pack-horses, monks, nuns and pilgrims come to worship at the shrine of Becket, were now mere monuments.

Time had but mellowed without defacing them, although the damp had made the stone peel off in flakes, giving it a look of scales. Long stretches of the city wall still stood, covered with a growth of wallflowers and of valerian, loved of cats. Houses and yet more houses crowded in upon the cathedral, usurping what by rights should have been a grassy close, guarded by elm-trees or by limes, with nests for rooks, who with their cawing supplemented the murmuring masses in the adjacent choir, for surely rooks in a cathedral close must ever praise the Lord for their quiet, sheltered lives. Grouped round its dominating church the city huddled as if it sought protection against progress and modernity. Bell Harry in his beauty seemed a giant lighthouse pointing heavenwards. It was indeed a haven where a man who had had his fill of this world's din might well retire to and find rest, for the incoming cricketers were evidently but birds of passage, and when they all departed once more the town would sink back to repose. Although the streets were decorated with flags and floral arches and filled with sunburned athletes, and the companions of their beds and bats, with cohorts of the clergy come up from their parsonages,

greeting effusively Old Brown of Brasenose or Smith of Wadham, whom they met annually at this, the week of weeks, for cricket is a sport that clergymen can attend without offence—nothing could take away the air of medieval quiet that broods upon the town. The peaceful landscape, with the slow Medway winding through its fields of lush, green grass, full of contemplative cows, its apple orchards, its rubble churches, with their truncated spires and air of immortality, is restful to the eye. The town itself, resting from its long strife with time, brings quiet to the soul.

On every side are relics of the past—gates, barbicans and walls, the grassy mound of the Dane John, about whose origin so many legends cluster, the square, squat tower, all that remains to show where once the church of Mary of Magdala stood, the crypt where exiled Huguenots performed their maiméd rites, the helm and gauntlets of the Black Prince of Wales and Gascony, above his tomb in the cathedral speak of the past; the resting past, for in the present, as in the days when past was present, there can be no peace. The quiet old city seemed indeed a fitting place in which to harbour one who long had battled with tempestuous seas, had heard the tropic rollers kissing the coral reefs and felt the sting of spindrift coating his beard with salt. So to the chapel of the older faith he held, not only as a faith, but as a bulwark against Oriental barbarism, we bore his coffin, buried under flowers, laid it before the altar railings, and his friends, Catholic and Protestant alike, with those who hold that God will not damn those whom He created with the potentialities of damnation in their bodies and their souls, for the mere fun of damning, all listened to the "blessed mutter of the Mass," devoutly on their knees. Within that little fane, with its images of saints, enough for faith, for faith works miracles, even upon the optic nerve, perhaps, but not enough for art, all became Catholics for the nonce. When all is said and done, of all the faiths it is the most consolatory, and tears stood in the eyes of many of the heterogeneous

congregation. What, after all, is better for the soul than prayer to an unseen God, in an uncomprehended tongue? When the priest got to *Ite Missa est* no one appeared to have found the service wearisome, for somehow it seemed to join us to the friend whom we should see no more, a little longer.

Then, through the streets all hung with flowers, as if to honour him whom we were taking to his anchorage, we took our way out to the cemetery. We passed through ancient archways, skirted the crumbling walls, caught glimpses of the cathedral towers up winding streets, marvelled at the number of the churches, and marked the advertisement of something or another, carried out in the vile bodies of three poor Christians, decked with huge, grinning cardboard heads, as in a pantomime.

I think there was little that we did not see, from the collected band of cricketers, who, standing at the chief hotel, saluted as we passed, as reverently as if the funeral had been that of one of their own mystery, to dogs, that nearly sacrificed themselves beneath the wheels, a skewbald horse that drew a gipsies' caravan, and bullocks going to the slaughter-house, for when the soul is stirred the external eye looks upon the world more keenly than when we sit at home smoking a good cigar. Those sorts of drives in funeral carriages appear to last for ever, in fact one almost wishes that they would, for it is well that now and then a man should see *memento mori* written up plainly before his eyes, for him to read and inwardly digest. As we rolled slowly on into the open country the engine of the motor hearse slowed down to the jog-trot of the old-time funeral horse, so heavily the hand of custom bears upon the reins of everything. I fell into what in the north we call a "dwawm," that state in which the mind is active and as if freed from its subjection to the flesh. Time put the clock back for some five-and-twenty years or so, and I saw him who now lay in his coffin underneath the flowers, his battle over and his place assured in the great fellowship that Chaucer captains, struggling to make his

way. What were his trials, what his disillusions, and what he suffered at the hands of fools, only himself could tell, and he was never one who wore his heart upon his sleeve for critics and for daws to peck at. For leagues we journeyed, as it appeared to me, passing men tedding haycocks in the field, Boy Scouts in brakes, and now and then a Kentish farmer in an old-fashioned dog-cart.

All the dead man had written and had done welled up in my mind. *Nostromo*, with its immortal picture of the old follower of Garibaldi, its keen analysis of character, and the local colour that he divined rather than knew by actual experience, its subtle humour, and the completeness of it all, forming an epic, as it were, of South America, written by one who saw it to the core, by intuition, amazed me just as it did when I first read it, *consule Planco*, in the years that have slipped past. Then came *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, into which he put the very soul of the old sailing ships, and that of those who sailed and suffered in them, as he himself once sailed and suffered and emerged, tempered and chastened by the sea. *Youth* and *The Heart of Darkness*, and then the tale of *Laughing Anne*, so deep and moving in its presentment of a lost woman's soul, all flitted through my mind. Lastly, *The Mirror of the Sea*, with its old Danish skipper who intoned the dirge of ships, past, present and to come, haunted my memory. So dreaming with my eyes wide open, all the long years of friendship rolled back again, and my lost friend appeared, as I remembered him—was it a hundred years ago, or was it yesterday? For death annihilates perspective, blots out all sense of time, and leaves the memory of those that we have lost blurred in the outline, but more present to the mind than when Time, seeming but an invention of the poets with his unmeaning hour-glass, and his unnecessary scythe, still rolled on, as it seemed eternally, just as a man when dozing on his horse during a tedious night march, or jogging on behind a troop of cattle in the sun, thinks that his whole existence has consisted but of an ache between the shoulders

and a dull throbbing at the knees. Waking or sleeping, or in a mixture of the two, but with my senses wide awake enough, I seemed to see my friend.

His nose was aquiline, his eyes most luminous and full. It seemed his very soul looked out of them, piercing the thoughts of those whom he addressed; his beard, trimmed to a point, was flecked with grey a little and his moustache was full. His face, of the dull yellow hue that much exposure to the tropic sun in youth so often causes, was lined and furrowed by the weather. His dark and wiry hair age had respected except that it had grown a little thin upon the temples, leaving his forehead bare. His cheek-bones, high and jutting out a little, revealed his Eastern European origin, just as his strong square figure and his walk showed him a sailor, who never seems to find the solid earth a quite familiar footing after a sloping deck. His feet were small and delicately shaped, and his fine, nervous hands, never at rest a minute in his life, attracted you at once. They supplemented his incisive speech by indefinable slight movements, not gestures in the Latin sense, for they were never raised into the air nor used for emphasis. They seemed to help him to express the meaning of his words without his own volition in a most admirable way. Something there was about him, both of the Court and of the quarterdeck, an air of courtesy and of high breeding, and yet with something of command. His mind, as often is the case with men of genius—and first and foremost what most struck one was his genius—seemed a strange compact of the conflicting qualities, compounded, in an extraordinary degree, of a deep subtlety and analytic power, with great simplicity.

As he discoursed upon the things that interested him, recalled his personal experiences, or poured his corn and his contempt upon unworthy motives and writers who to attain their facile triumphs had pandered to bad taste, an inward fire seemed to be smouldering ready to break out, just as the fire that so long smouldered in the hold of the doomed ship

in which he made his first voyage to the East suddenly burst out into flames. His tricks of speech and manner, the way he grasped both of your hands in his, his sudden breaking into French, especially when he was moved by anything, as when I asked him to attend some meeting or another, and he replied, "Non, il y aura des russes," grinding his teeth with rage. England, the land of his adoption, he loved fervently, and could not tolerate that anything with which he had been once familiar should be tampered with, as often happens when a man adopts a second fatherland, for to change that which first attracted him seems a flat blasphemy.

As the car drew up at the cemetery gate, with a harsh, grating noise upon the gravel, I wakened from my dream. The rain had cleared and the sun poured down upon us, as in procession, headed by the acolytes and priests, we bore the coffin to the grave. A semi-circle of Scotch firs formed, as it were, a little harbour for him. The breeze blew freshly, south-west by south a little westerly—a good wind, as I thought, to steer up Channel by, and one that he who would no longer feel it on his cheek, looking aloft to see if all the sails were drawing properly, must have been glad to carry when he struck soundings, passing the Wolf Rock or the Smalls after foul weather in the Bay.

Handsomely, as he who lay in it might well have said, they lowered the coffin down. The priest had left his Latin and said a prayer or two in English, and I was glad of it, for English surely was the speech the Master Mariner most loved, and honoured in the loving with new graces of his own.

The voyage was over, and the great spirit rested from its toil, safe in the English earth that he had dreamed of as a child in far Ukrainia. A gleam of sun lit up the red brick houses of the town. It fell upon the tower of the cathedral, turning it into a great, glowing beacon pointing to the sky. The trees moved gently in the breeze, and in the fields the ripening corn was undulating softly, just as the waves waft

in on an atoll in the Pacific, with a light swishing sound. All was well chosen for his resting-place, and so we left him with his sails all duly furled, ropes flemished down, and with the anchor holding truly in the kind Kentish earth, until the Judgment Day. The gulls will bring him tidings as they fly past above his grave, with their wild voices, if he should weary for the sea and the salt smell of it.

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on 05 October, 2018